

# **Young Guard!**

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**THE COMMUNIST YOUTH LEAGUE,  
PETROGRAD 1917-1920**

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**Isabel A. Tirado**

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PETROGRAD 1917-1920**

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**Isabel A. Tirado**

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Young Guard!



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# Introduction

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The Komsomol was the child of the Russian Revolution. From its inception in 1917 and 1918 it became a staunch ally of the Communist party and Soviet state and a trainer of future leaders. From its first months of life the youth organization defined its primary function to be the transformation of its followers' consciousness through political education. In its capacity as political educator it played a central role in mobilizing support for the state and Party. At the same time, the Communist Youth League (known by its acronym, Komsomol) exerted pressure on the new state to respond to the specific needs of its youthful constituency, particularly to their desire for education and labor protection. While the early history of the Komsomol cannot be isolated from the revolutionary movement that gave it life, the Komsomol itself may be seen as a microcosm of the larger process.

The present study of the Komsomol elucidates an important part of the social base of the Soviet state. This work fits into a growing body of scholarly literature which has moved away from a traditional exclusive concern with higher Party leadership in order to focus on particular institutions, movements, and problems that render the social and cultural components of the early Soviet state intelligible. The Komsomol became an important consensus builder for the new state. Its followers embraced and promoted the Revolution as the dawn of a liberating new order. Radical youths identified themselves with the revolutionary process, in part because the Revolution's leaders praised their enthusiasm, courage, and loyalty. Indeed, the Revolution was often personified as a young worker. Just as important, Communist youths felt they were able to

channel their energies into a multitude of heretofore undreamed of activities.

This book's underlying theme is the transformation of the youth organization from its origins in 1917 as a broad, loose coalition of radical youths to a politically exclusive, bureaucratic, hierarchical institution. This process is generally associated with the 1920s and Stalin's rise. In reality, its contours became visible by the end of the Civil War, though the process matured in the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, the Komsomol of the 1920s and 1930s is incomprehensible without an understanding of its history during the Revolution and Civil War.

The participation of youth in the revolutionary process has been neglected by Western scholars. The most extensive work on the Komsomol, Ralph Fisher's *Pattern for Soviet Youth*, outlines the ideological development of the League.<sup>1</sup> Fisher's work is a study of the growing orthodoxy and political integration of the Komsomol into the structure of the Soviet political system as seen through the deliberations and decisions taken at the Komsomol's national congresses. It deals with the Komsomol throughout the whole USSR in the years 1918 to 1954, and barely touches on the period before the First Congress (October 1918).

On the other hand, the present work examines in detail the especially important formative period beginning in the spring of 1917. By concentrating on Petrograd up to 1920 and by using a broader range of sources, it attempts to provide a much fuller and clearer picture of what happened to the spontaneous, mass efforts of Soviet youth in the course of the early consolidation of the Revolution. In addition to focusing on the specific needs that led to the emergence of the movement, and therefore to the articulation of radical demands by a specific social group, an analysis of the youth movement in its early stages offers a glimpse at the kinds of organizational structures established by participants in popular movements. This in turn facilitates an understanding of the relationship between spontaneity and hierarchical or bureaucratic tendencies within the Revolution.

For this vantage point, I am indebted to the recent Western histories of the social dynamics of the Revolution. Alexander Rabinowitch's study of the interaction between the Bolshevik party and the radicalized Petrograd working class, Diane Koenker's and David Mandel's analyses of the workers of Moscow and Petrograd, Rex Wade's study of the social composition and political aspirations of the Red Guards and workers' militias, Richard Stites' study of the

## Introduction

women's movement, and Stephen Smith's book on the workers' control movement offer scholars of the Revolution a greater understanding of the social base of the revolutionary process and of the early Soviet state.<sup>2</sup> Yet with the exception of Koenker's article on the Moscow youth movement in 1917, there have been no studies that explore the generational dimension as a perspective from which to view the chaotic unfolding of the Revolution.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike their Western colleagues, Soviet historians have been interested in the origins of the Komsomol itself but have shown less concern for the first organizational efforts on the part of youth, in particular the organization *Trud i svet* (Labor and Light). Though *Trud i svet* was definitely a militant working-class organization, Soviet historians play down its importance, primarily because it was not a Bolshevik-sponsored organization. Little more has been done on the Socialist League of Young Workers (*Sotsialisticheskii soiuz rabochei molodezhi*, or SSRM), the immediate precursor of the Komsomol. The SSRM, though more acceptable to Soviet historians from an ideological point of view, was short-lived and less popular than its predecessor.

Soviet historians of the Revolution have stressed the role of male, skilled, politically experienced adult workers as the true vanguard of the revolutionary movement; other groups, such as youth and women, have been portrayed as politically backward and relatively less important. This approach suggests a degree of homogeneity to the working class that is contradicted by the vigor of such particularistic organizations as *Trud i svet*, the first working class youth organization in Petrograd. Further, Soviet historians have consistently minimized such spontaneous efforts of the working class as *Trud i svet*, while emphasizing, instead, the overriding role of the Party as the guiding force behind the workers' movement.

Soviet historians have dedicated numerous studies to the history of the Komsomol from the First Congress in 1918 through the Civil War; but because of the politically sensitive nature of the topic, there have been many distortions and omissions. The literature written during the Stalin years particularly reflects this. But even more recent works say little about such Komsomol leaders as Eduard Leske and Vladimir Dunaevskii, key figures in the early history of the League, because of their connections with oppositional currents. The same applies to the discussions of important controversies, which Soviet historians treat schematically, if at all.

Both Western and Soviet historians have, therefore, neglected



some important aspects which this study of the early years of the Komsomol addresses. One of the most important aspects is the diversity and pluralism of the youth movement imparted to the general workers' movement, especially in the early months of the Revolution. Like other popular movements in the spring and summer of 1917, the youth movement enjoyed a high degree of participation at the grass roots level. The generational conflict from which the youth movement arose points, after all, to a more basic tension between particularistic drives and the pull toward integration into the larger movement. While the youth organization fought for its own set of priorities, its members always felt that the destiny of their movement was tied intrinsically to the fate of the Revolution.

Consistently, youth activists defended the overthrow of the old political system and economic order and supported the new institutions of power: the Soviet, the factory committees, the workers' militias. They were also consistently willing to subsume their particular interests whenever more urgent tasks related to the larger struggle arose. This became especially obvious during the various crises in the summer and fall of 1917 and particularly during the Civil War, when armed defense took precedence over any other type of activity.

For our purposes, the category of "youth" used in the first two chapters includes ages thirteen to twenty, the age boundaries that youth organizers established for their organization in 1917. In doing so, they were responding to a political and professional reality that excluded them from participation in working-class organizations, despite their increased integration in the war-time work force. Political parties, factory committees, and some of the district soviets disfranchised youth under twenty-one years of age until the youth movement made this an issue. It was precisely this disenfranchisement which gave the impetus for their initial organizational drive. Not surprisingly, the program and charters of the youth organization explicitly established twenty as the maximum age for membership. In 1917 youth leaders tended to be under twenty; rank and file members were primarily fifteen to seventeen years old. Gradually, the age boundary was extended and by 1920 the age limit had been set at twenty-three years of age, while the average member was twenty years old. This reflected the professionalization and bureaucratization of the youth leadership and, later, the changing class composition of the Komsomol. During the New Economic Policy (NEP), the age limit was raised further as the number of peasant and

## Introduction

rural activists, who were not readily accepted into the Party, remained within the League's membership and leadership. But this phenomenon belongs to a later period and not to the first years of the Komsomol's history.

This book relies primarily on published Soviet sources written before the Second Five Year Plan and, to some extent, on memoirs of various activists published since Stalin's death. The 1920s produced numerous memoirs, personal accounts, and histories written by participants in the youth movement that are notable for the diversity of points of view and for their wealth of details. The limitation of such memoirs and personal accounts stems from their authors' lack of distance and frequent attempts to use such writings to validate their own role or ideological position at given points. A more serious limitation stems from the fact that so many Komsomol activists perished in the purges and in World War II, probably depriving the field of invaluable recollections and firsthand histories. To complement the memoirs and participants' histories, I have consulted the published charters and programs of the youth organizations, the proceedings of the Komsomol congresses, collections of documents pertaining to the popular movement in 1917, such as the resolutions and acts of the district Soviets, and the youth and other periodical literature for the period beginning in 1917. Those official documents force the narrative into organizational and political debates carried out at high levels of the Komsomol organization; our story might have been more personalized if there had been more subjective and grass roots accounts to counterbalance the official ones.

The present study focuses on the Komsomol organization in Petrograd, the city that engendered the only large, spontaneous mass movement of Socialist youth in 1917. Though other Russian cities had socialist youth organizations, they were neither mass nor spontaneous movements but, instead, Party-inspired and Party-led organizations. These lacked a mass character until the 1920s. The focus on the Petrograd organization during the Revolution of 1917 and the Civil War brings concreteness to an otherwise vast and complex subject. It allows the exposition of particular dynamics: interdistrict relations within Petrograd and the interaction between the Komsomol center and the local branches as they formulated and implemented policy.

This book consists of two parts: the origins of the Communist youth organization (1917-1918) and the consolidation of the Komsomol during the Civil War. Part One begins with a chapter on the

emergence of Petrograd's Socialist youth movement in Vyborg district, the citadel of the radical workers' movement in 1917, and its Bolshevization by the time of the October insurrection. The second chapter discusses the deactivation of the youth movement immediately following the October Revolution and the process by which the organization lost its initial spontaneous, mass character to become an association consisting almost exclusively of young Communists. The second chapter also discusses the relationship between the Petrograd and Moscow organizations and the convocation of the first national congress of the Komsomol. These two chapters establish the conceptual framework for the monograph. They describe the membership, goals, and internal deliberations of the youth organization. They analyze the organizational apparatus and the relationship of the youth organization to the Bolshevik party and, later, to the Soviet state.

Part Two consists of four chapters that cover the Komsomol's changing social composition, educational activities, economic work, and relationship to the Communist party and the Soviet state during 1919 and 1920. The period during which the Communist youth movement solidified its position as a national organization coincided with the near demise of the Petrograd branch. The working class that had nurtured the youth movement was decimated by unemployment, the evacuation of many industries, and the exodus of workers to the countryside. Those conditions, together with the reality that the League often served as a conduit for the mobilization of thousands of youths into the Red Army, deprived the organization of stable local collectives. The leadership generally found itself isolated from its working-class base, even at this early stage.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five explore the discussions around the problem of the Komsomol's diminishing working-class following and the measures and types of activities that the organization pursued in order to extricate itself from the untenable situation of a movement that had lost its mass character. During the Civil War the Komsomol developed a special relationship to the Communist party, transforming itself into the "reserves" of the Party. Although that relationship restricted the scope of League activities, it also enhanced the prestige and status of the youth organization. Young Party cadres became the core of the League's leadership, providing the organization with articulate and politically experienced personnel. The League's political position facilitated the fulfillment of many of the educational and economic goals of the

## Introduction

organized youth movement. This explains the Komsomol's success in securing ambitious projects such as the reform of the school system and the revision of labor protection laws.

This privileged status, which gave the youth organization a means to influence policy-making and implementation in specific spheres, ironically also limited the Komsomol's activities and *modus operandi*. This is the subject of the sixth and final chapter. While the organization had received its initial impetus from particularistic drives within the working-class movement in 1917, its special relationship to the Party and state, coupled with its own specific development, caused the organization to restrict the scope of its functions to those of an adjunct to the Communist party. Those controversies that shook the Komsomol during the early period were the result of discussions concerning its role in the new state and its relationship to the Party.

## NOTES

1. Ralph Talcott Fisher, *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

2. Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1976); Diane Koenker, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); David Mandel, *The Petrograd Workers and the Fall of the Old Regime: From the February Revolution to the July Days, 1917* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983); Rex A. Wade, *Red Guards and Workers' Militias in the Russian Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984); Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Stephen A. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories, 1917-1918* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

3. Diane Koenker, "Urban Families, Working Class Youth Groups, and the 1917 Revolution in Moscow," in *The Family in Imperial Russia*, ed. D. Ransell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 280-304.

# **PART I**

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## **Youth in Revolution: 1917-1918**

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# The Socialist Youth Movement in Petrograd, 1917

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In the spring of 1917, shortly before the May Day celebrations, a group of teenage workers at the factory Russian Renault dropped their tools and marched to the factory committee. They had just heard that the factory's adult workers had received a 25 percent wage adjustment. Young workers were given only a 15 percent increment. Incensed by this inequity, the young metal workers organized a youth league at their factory. United, they presented their demands before the factory committee and pressured that body to support their cause before management.

Rumors of their success soon spread among the young metal workers in Vyborg district. Within weeks, they launched an organizational campaign that put the demands of young workers on the Revolution's agenda. These efforts resulted in the creation of the first spontaneous, mass organization of young Socialist workers in Russia. Its success made the Petrograd organization a model for organizational efforts throughout Russia.

Part of the ferment unleashed by the February Revolution, the socialist youth movement emerged as a coalition of young, radical industrial workers. The first youth league, *Trud i svet* (Labor and Light), brought together almost half of all young workers in Petrograd and initiated an impressive campaign for the rights of a nearly forgotten sector of the working class. Yet within four months it underwent a painful crisis that culminated in its losing its predominant position to the more radical Socialist League of Young Workers (*Sotsialisticheskii soiuz rabochei molodezhi*, or SSRM). The trajectory of the youth movement in 1917, like that of the Revolution, was complex. Its basic outline paralleled the course taken by the

Petrograd working class as a whole between February and October. It began with a call for unity among all progressive forces. When important sectors of the youth leadership failed to embrace a more militant course, they lost support at the district level and contributed to the further radicalization of the movement. In August the movement discarded its moderate leadership and identified itself with the Bolshevik party.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Politicization of Petrograd's Young Industrial Workers**

The politicization of young workers had its roots in their integration into Russia's war-time labor force. In Petrograd up to 40 percent of the industrial work force had been conscripted. At the same time, between 1914 and 1917 the industrial work force in the city had grown by 62 percent, from 242,600 to 392,800.<sup>2</sup> Women, adolescents, and rural migrants replaced the mobilized men. From 1914 to 1917 the number of male workers grew more than 52 percent, while the number of women and young workers under eighteen grew by 111 percent and 39 percent, respectively. Of the 392,800 workers, those under the age of twenty-one constituted between 22 and 25 percent of Petrograd's work force.<sup>3</sup>

Z. V. Stepanov breaks down the category of young worker into three age groups: under sixteen, sixteen to seventeen, and eighteen to twenty (see Table 1). According to Stepanov, youths aged twenty and under accounted for approximately 93,000 workers in the industrial work force of Petrograd and the surrounding areas in 1917.<sup>4</sup> Stepanov reconstructs his breakdown of the work force along age categories on the basis of the 1918 census. Because of the collapse of industry in 1918, the reliability of that census is open to question. However, accounts by Komsomol activists and eyewitnesses indicate that, if anything, Stepanov's estimates were low.<sup>5</sup> Earlier, albeit subjective, accounts give higher estimates of youth participation in the industrial work force than Stepanov's: 100,000 young workers were aged twenty and under.<sup>6</sup>

Table 1. Young Workers in Petrograd's Industrial Work Force (1917)

Age Groups:	Percentage of Total Workforce		
	under 16	16-17	18-20
Male	2.3	3.5	3.6
Female	1.2	3.5	8.2
Total	3.5	7.0	11.8

Source: Z.V. Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 38.

Youth made up 20 percent of the mineral processing industry and over 10 percent of the textile, food, and leather industries. Table 2 shows the proportion of youth in the work force of seven major industries. However, the table only includes youths up to age seventeen, excluding the eighteen to twenty sub-group. A breakdown of that group might reflect their greater participation in those industries requiring a higher level of skills, such as the metal industry. Young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty, who would be eligible for military service, would have worked only if they qualified for deferments on the basis of physical disabilities or employment in highly skilled jobs. Moreover, Table 2 is based on figures as of 1 January 1917, which were over 2 percent lower than the proportion of youths for the entire year. Stepanov holds that the proportion of young workers to adults continued to grow in the course of 1917. While young workers under eighteen made up 8.2 percent of the work force as of 1 January 1917, that age category constituted 10.5 percent of all industrial workers for the entire year.<sup>7</sup> Despite these limitations, Table 2 offers a general picture of the distribution of young workers according to industry.

No other branch in industry employed as many young workers as the metal industry. The largest branch in the war-time economy, Petrograd's metal industry employed over 60 percent of the city's industrial work force in 1917 (see Table 2). Thus the number of metal workers under eighteen (15,666) surpassed the number of the same age group employed in the other six industries combined. To those must be added young workers between the ages of eighteen and

## The Socialist Youth Movement in Petrograd, 1917

twenty. That category numbered approximately 46,350 workers. There is no reason why that age category would have a lower participation in the metal industry than the age group under eighteen. Thus it can be assumed that at least half of those 46,350 workers eighteen to twenty years old were employed in the metal industry. This takes into account the fact that over two-thirds of that category were young women (see Table 1). In the war economy of 1917, more women were employed in the metal industry than in any other branch.<sup>8</sup> In all, approximately 40,000 workers under twenty-one were employed in Petrograd's metal industry in 1917.<sup>9</sup>

Table 2. Employment of Youth in Petrograd's Main Industries (1917)

Branch	Percent of All Workers	Total Number of Workers	Percent of Youths under 18	Number of Youths under 18
Metal	60.4	237,369	6.6	15,666
Textile	11.2	44,115	12.7	5,602
Chemical	10.2	40,087	6.5	2,605
Food	4.0	15,773	11.8	1,861
Wood	1.7	6,754	10.9	506
Leather	3.2	12,627	10.9	1,376
Mineral proc.	1.0	3,900	20.4	796

Source: Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 29 and 34.

As it expanded during the war the metal industry simplified its production process to incorporate less skilled workers. For example, the foundry New Parvainen employed 300 young workers in 1913; by 1915 young workers accounted for 2,876 of a total of 8,000 workers at that plant.<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to establish the number of young metal workers in individual factories and plants. New Parvainen, with its high proportion of young workers, might not have characterized other plants. Yet the fact remains that Vyborg district, with its large proportion of metalworkers (84 percent of the district's 68,932 workers),<sup>11</sup> supplied the organization "Trud i svet" with 15,000 to 18,000 members, the overwhelming majority of whom were metalworkers.<sup>12</sup> In its initial phase, the youth movement embodied the political and cultural aspirations of Petrograd's radical young metalworkers. It sought to establish youth clubs, summer schools, basic education courses, vocational training, all highly popular demands of young city dwellers.

In the work force, most young workers performed relatively



simple monotonous tasks. Many were hired as apprentices, often a euphemism for highly exploited cheap labor. Working nine or ten hours per day, they were poorly paid. Even the relatively well paid young workers at the Putilov Factory earned one ruble per day; highly skilled workers at the same plant received between ten and fifteen rubles per day.<sup>13</sup>

Greater participation in the work force, poor working conditions, and low wages do not explain, in and of themselves, the growing radicalization of young workers in the period between February and October of 1917. In part, the phenomenon may be ascribed to the development of what Diane Koenker has called the "youth cult." Social and economic factors encouraged the concentration of large numbers of young workers in war-time industrial centers. The integration of this sector into the economy resulted in the relegation of adult working responsibilities to young people who had largely severed family ties and who entered marriage relatively late.<sup>14</sup> This prolonged period of independence allowed them to participate in educational and political activities with other teenagers.

A large proportion of young workers were city born, the children of working-class parents. For the most part, they had gone to city schools, if only for two to four years. The level of basic literacy was especially high for young workers employed in the metal industry, where 92 percent of all male workers and 70 percent of all female workers were literate.<sup>15</sup> Among young workers literacy levels were even higher.

Young city-born workers became a "source of radicalization" for the working class as a whole. They differed from their rural cousins in their sophistication and their relatively carefree life. They were free of the familial and communal restraints that tied down young peasants. And their prolonged freedom allowed them to seek out the company of others like themselves.<sup>16</sup> Although relatively educated, and cultured, young workers felt alienated from the upper and middle classes and looked for activities that could offer them a sense of community. While many joined cultural and educational clubs, other young workers became involved in the revolutionary parties.<sup>17</sup>

A few years before the February Revolution the tsarist police assessed that the most radical ideas found their staunchest supporters among young industrial workers.<sup>18</sup> During the war, young workers often spearheaded strikes. They prepared for the strike by

distributing underground proclamations and forbidden newspapers. At the right moment, they would stop the machines at a given factory, shut the lights, and call on all workers to abandon the work site. Once outside, young workers, "armed with cobblestones, ... hurled them at attacking Cossacks and city police."<sup>19</sup>

The world war spawned working class organizations in Russia's major cities. Young workers responded by creating revolutionary circles as early as 1915 and 1916. One of the most important youth groups was organized at the Putilov works. Soviet historians attribute its founding to Vasilii P. Alekseev. The official cult around the revolutionary and Civil War hero, "Vasia" Alekseev, has magnified and, in a sense, obscured his actual role in the early youth movement in general and in the Putilov group in particular. Ivan Skorinko, one of the group's founders, contended that Alekseev had not been the founder or even a member of the Putilov circle, though he took great interest in its activities and advised its members on readings and political issues.<sup>20</sup> According to Skorinko, the group limited its work to technical tasks such as agitation before strikes and the distribution of leaflets, which they inserted inside the popular newspapers, *Kopeika* and *Birzhevye vedomosti* and which they sold outside the Putilov gates. In 1916 the Putilov group consisted of a small number of Bolshevik youths who gathered to discuss reading material.<sup>21</sup> By no means a mass organization, this group served as a precursor to a later youth organization, the Socialist League of Young Workers [SSRM].

Another pre-revolutionary youth group emerged at the machine factory New Lessner. Grigorii Driazgov's autobiography offers a glimpse at factory organizing there. Driazgov, the son of a roofer, began to work as an errand boy at New Parviainen when his father died, leaving the family destitute. At that point, Driazgov was pulled out of school; he had completed only the second grade. In 1916 he found work at New Lessner's small artillery shop. In March that year he and a friend organized a work stoppage in support of their fellow unskilled shop workers, most of whom were women and youths. This particular strike proved unsuccessful: it lasted three weeks, but the skilled workers at New Lessner did not support the effort. As retaliation, the strikers encountered lock-outs at other factories and many of the troublemakers who were of military age were drafted.<sup>22</sup>

These activities on the part of young organizers at Putilov and New Lessner lacked a specific youth consciousness: they did not champion the distinct demands of their age group. There was no

structure or forum to voice specific youth interests. Such an institution or forum could not emerge before young workers themselves recognized the need for their own economic and political organs of struggle. A mass youth movement also required the legal right to organize and this was not attained until after February 1917. Yet as their activism in the strike movement implied, the lack of organization did not mean that youth were not politicized but rather, that for the time being, they were not conscious of the need to defend their particular rights.

In his autobiography, Driazgov recounts how on 23 February, on his way to work at the New Parviainen factory, he met a woman worker who asked him to join her and other women in the celebration of International Women's Day. Driazgov recalls how other workers at his factory also joined them and how the demonstration gained momentum, gathering a growing number of supporters as it moved down the Vyborg streets.<sup>23</sup> That same day, women textile workers appealed to the metal workers at the New Lessner factory to join them in their strike. This appeal provoked an intense debate among the factory's Bolsheviks. Young workers played the decisive role as they pressured the factory's adult male workers to join the striking women.<sup>24</sup>

That day the police reported a crowd of a thousand women and young workers who chanted "Give us bread!" on the Kazan Bridge. On the afternoon of 24 February, a crowd of 3,000 young and adult workers congregated again at the bridge. Earlier that day, a crowd of 6,000, young workers in their front ranks, protested at Kamennooostrovskii Prospekt and a crowd of 5,000 women and youths went to the Petrograd Munitions Works to urge the workers to leave the plant.<sup>25</sup>

Young workers set up crucial communications networks in which they served as couriers of news and police movements.<sup>26</sup> About 50 percent of the forces protecting the Tauride Palace during the February Revolution consisted of youths.<sup>27</sup> At the factory level, the proportion of young participants in the Red Guards was equally impressive: they made up 30.5 percent of the Red Guard at New Parviainen, 22.5 percent at New Lessner, and 30 percent at Gvozdiilnyi.<sup>28</sup> Young workers also participated in the ranks of the Soviet militias, carrying out such functions as repressing the rampant banditry of the revolutionary days.<sup>29</sup>

In the course of 1917 young workers began to think of themselves as a separate group. Their activism in the February

Revolution led young workers, and the working class as a whole, to expect certain benefits and rights from the Revolution. After February many young workers came to resent the fact that the popular institutions for which they had fought, especially the factory committees and soviets, denied them separate representation. Soon, they concluded that their interests could not be served by the political and economic structures established by and for adult workers. And this awareness served as the impetus for the organizational drive that began in the spring in Vyborg district and spread to other working-class districts in Petrograd.

### **The Youth Movement in the Spring of 1917**

Economic grievances served as the catalyst for organization. The efforts begun by the young workers at Russian Renault resulted in a more equitable wage adjustment and in the factory committee's acceptance of two youth representatives. The victory of the young Russian Renault workers inspired other youths to bring their cause before factory committees throughout Vyborg district. I. D. Chugurin, the Bolshevik Vyborg district leader, encouraged the youth activists to organize a separate column of young workers for the May Day demonstrations.<sup>30</sup>

Calling itself the "initiating group for the organization of young workers," a group of young activists canvassed all the factories in Vyborg district.<sup>31</sup> Wherever they went, they were able to impress upon their comrades the need for an autonomous youth organization that would protect their economic rights.<sup>32</sup> Youth committees soon mushroomed in many of the city's large factories. On Vasilevskii Island, the apprentices took their grievances before the district Soviet, demanding a commitment to the protection of working minors, recognition as a working-class organization, and a room for their activities.<sup>33</sup> Similar representations were made to the Vyborg, Petrograd, and Peterhof district Soviets.<sup>34</sup>

The May Day demonstration became the rallying cry behind the organization ferment in April. Youth activists hoped that May Day would provide an impetus for further organizational work throughout the city, broaden their base of support, and serve as a symbol of youth's potential political impact.<sup>35</sup> The first citywide gathering of youth representatives met on 13 April and elected an organizational bureau responsible for expanding into other districts besides Vyborg and Peterhof.<sup>36</sup> With the support of the Bolshevik Vyborg district



committee and the district Soviet, the delegates made arrangements for May Day. More important, they called for the establishment of youth commissions in all factories. Each commission would send a delegate to its factory committee to monitor working conditions and lobby for the six-hour day and professional training and literacy courses for young workers.<sup>37</sup>

While the organizational drive continued at a brisk pace just before May Day, it encountered much resistance from adult workers, who feared that the creation of a separate youth organization would undermine the unity of the working class.<sup>38</sup> In general, Bolshevik-dominated district Soviets and factory committees supported the organizational drive of young factory workers, but the hostility youth activists encountered was more often tied to generational tensions than to party affiliation. This tension, which would persist throughout the early part of the Revolution and the Civil War, has been analyzed by Stephen Smith. According to Smith, working-class leaders unconsciously assumed a paternalistic position toward women, youth, and unskilled workers. Though they were committed to promote the interests of "less fortunate" sectors within their class, they were nonetheless reluctant to admit that contradictions existed between men and women or youth and adults within the work force. They were even less willing to recognize the right of these sectors to create their own organizations or to have special representation within workers' institutions, such as factory committees or Soviets.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically, the youth movement owed some of its initial success to adult supporters. The Vyborg district Soviet, in particular, gave the nascent movement a sense of legitimacy, material help, and ideological guidance.

Despite initial obstacles, the new organization mobilized an impressive total of 100,000 young workers, who marched in their separate columns on May Day.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, the new organization filled a political need not addressed by any other working-class institution up to that moment. For the time being, young workers would be represented by the organization founded by the vyborzhtsy.

By May Day, the Petrograd youth organization had acquired a name, "Trud i svet," and the leadership of Petr Shevtsov. The organization, and especially its leadership, have been the subject of severe criticism by Soviet historians and, in retrospect, by many of the participants themselves.<sup>41</sup> But Trud i svet's membership reached 50,000 by the summer of 1917; even its sharpest Soviet critics agree that, though politically "deformed," this was definitely a mass



movement.<sup>42</sup> The much-maligned Shevtsov remains a mysterious personage. A student of peasant background, he had no party affiliation, though he voiced sympathy for Kerensky. Through his acquaintance with the worker-poet Yakov Berdnikov and the metal worker Grigorii Driazgov, Shevtsov gained access to the movement's leadership in mid-April.<sup>43</sup> Moving into an intellectual vacuum, Shevtsov wrote the May Day appeal for the organization, and subsequently its charter and manifesto. His position became formal in mid-May, when he became the chairman of the newly elected All-District Youth Council.

When Shevtsov joined the movement, it already had a grass roots leadership. The organization's manifesto and charter voiced the needs and aspirations of its young leaders and expressed a vision of *Trud i svet* as a radical, proletarian organization.<sup>44</sup> *Trud i svet* aimed at developing enlightened and conscious citizens, capable of acting as advocates for their own rights. To achieve this, *Trud i svet* called for the creation of grammar schools, a university for young workers, and professional training in polytechnical and industrial trades schools (see Appendix 1).

The documents voiced the educational and cultural aspirations of this sector of the working class; however, they did not correspond to the movement's political and economic practice. Both documents ignored some of the issues that had motivated youth to organize: the struggle for wage parity, representation in factory committees, and the six-hour day (which was linked to the demand for universal education). The vote for eighteen-year-olds, the most pressing political issue for youth, was also absent from these early documents. The organization identified itself as Socialist. Though it advocated the "toppling" of capitalism, it disclaimed organized participation in that struggle, stressing the primacy of unity within the working class over divisive political affiliations. Class unity in this context meant *bezpartiinnost'* and illustrated the general political consensus of the working class in the spring of 1917. However, in the next few weeks party affiliation would gain importance. Tensions would arise between *Trud i svet*'s relatively moderate citywide leadership, who followed the documents' conciliatory spirit, and the district organizations, which became politically more radical. The manifesto called for vigilance and defensive militance to protect the gains of the Revolution; however, it did not advise members to participate in any form of armed organization, although many *Trud i svet* members belonged to the Red Guards or the workers' militias.<sup>45</sup>

High levels of rank-and-file participation and local initiative characterized Trud i svet from the start. In the early spring, factory activists founded larger organizational units in the form of district committees. Granting district committees a crucial position in the organization's structure, Trud i svet's charter allowed them to retain an impressive degree of autonomy. District committees had the right to work out and implement policy in matters pertaining to education or to the economic, legal, and political protection of young workers within their own districts. The charter acknowledged the importance of the district committees by guaranteeing their active participation in the organization's central organ, the All-District Council; each district committee sent its executive committee and four deputies to that body.

Other clauses, however, imposed a hierarchical structure on the youth movement. Trud i svet's charter conferred preponderant power on the All-District Council, and especially on that body's presidium and commissions. Although Council members retained their links to their district committees, the relationship between the base and the district committees remained vague. The rank and file elected the members of the district committees but not their executive committees, which were elected by the members of the district committees. In effect, the rank and file had limited direct control over the All-District Council and its presidium, and even less over the commissions, whose members, appointees of the All-District Council, actually worked out and implemented policy.

By mid-May eight district organizations had affiliated themselves with Trud i svet.<sup>46</sup> The majority of the district representatives to the council were Bolsheviks, Anarchists, or Menshevik-Internationalists. By contrast, Trud i svet's presidium was politically more moderate. The stage was set for a struggle within the council between the presidium and the more radical members. But in the weeks following May Day, the activists concentrated their energies in consolidating their district organizations and in wresting concessions from their factory committees and district Soviets.

Vyborg district had by far the largest organization, with at least 15,000 members.<sup>47</sup> The Bolshevik-dominated Vyborg district Soviet acknowledged the growing importance of the organization by granting seats to two youth delegates, Pavel Burmistrov and Leopold Levenson. In mid-June, Burmistrov appeared before the district Soviet and asked for the enactment of the six-hour day for young workers. Some radical factory committees in Vyborg, such as those

in Erikson, New Lessner, and New Parviainen, approved the shorter work day.<sup>48</sup> Vyborg district's department of education accepted Grigorii Driazgov as a youth representative and provided two teachers and material for a summer literacy school.<sup>49</sup> In April and May, as the movement expanded, the Vasilevskii, Petrograd, and Peterhof district Soviets also included youth issues on their agendas, granting the delegates meeting rooms and funds.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the successes at the local level, the All-City Council attained relatively little recognition from the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet. In the wake of local victories, many Trud i svet members wanted to take their demands before the Central Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. This plan sparked the first controversy within the All-District Council. When the All-District Council discussed the demands to be presented in a formal letter to the Minister of Labor, a group of Bolsheviks and Anarchists, mainly from Peterhof district, proposed a demonstration and strike.<sup>51</sup> Opposed by Shevtsov and others, these militants walked out of the meeting. However, the Bolshevik Party Peterhof leadership instructed the young rebels to return to Trud i svet and work within that organization to expose its "compromising tendencies."<sup>52</sup>

Trud i svet's decentralized structure allowed the newly formed opposition to use particular issues to split the organization at the district level. Levenson points out that the absence of strict ideological lines and of a strong central leadership facilitated this process. Driazgov describes the same dynamic at the factory level:

Apprentice councils in the factories were under the political influence of one or another party, depending on the party composition of a given factory committee. More and more often, at district meetings of youth, there would be outbursts as youth representatives and delegates would come forth with speeches as members of a political party.<sup>54</sup>

In the middle of the schism, the young Bolshevik Vasiliĭ Alekseev made his first appearance as a delegate from the Narva organization to the All-District Council. Alekseev mounted an attack on Trud i svet by focusing on the organization's charter, which was in the process of being confirmed by the individual district organizations, and presented the charter of the Narva district organization as a superior alternative. Driazgov acted as defender of

Trud i svet's charter. An unequal match for Alekseev, Driazgov found himself unsuccessfully defending his position before the Nevskii district organization, which rejected Trud i svet's charter and, therefore, membership in that organization.<sup>55</sup> This was the first district organization to adhere to the Narva position.

Thereafter, many district branches rejected the charter. By 16 June, when the presidium called a meeting to celebrate the four-month jubilee of the Revolution and to confirm the manifesto, the composition of the All-District Council had changed. The discussion around the charter radicalized many districts and led them to oust those delegates who had supported the document. Consequently, the council's newly elected majority now opposed the charter. Trud i svet's predominance within the movement had been challenged.<sup>56</sup>

### **The Socialist League of Young Workers (SSRM)**

The contradictions within Trud i svet sharpened during the summer. At a Council meeting shortly after the July Days, Shevtsov defended the organization's charter and criticized those who had participated in the attempted insurrection. This criticism was a blunder: most members had participated in the protests.<sup>57</sup> Many of the delegates called for Shevtsov's expulsion from the organization. This pattern repeated itself at the district level; soon Shevtsov lost ground even in Vyborg, his stronghold.<sup>58</sup> The conflict came to a head at a council meeting held on 27 July. A slight, thin, energetic youth, Vasia Alekseev, stood before the gathering and charged:

Mr. Shevtsov, you are not quite on the same path as young workers, whose interests strictly dictate the irreconcilable struggle against the existing government, whereas you divert them [and] feed them unrealizable, classless, cultural dreams about the future.<sup>59</sup>

By then Shevtsov had been isolated, and the majority approved the dissolution of the All-District Council. His opponents called a citywide conference to be held on 18 August.

How did Trud i svet lose its hegemony over the movement to the Narva-Peterhof-based Socialist League of Young Workers (SSRM)? Trud i svet's opponents had launched a two-front attack from without



and from within. The inside effort was headed by V. Alekseev, I. Skorinko, and S. Minaev; the external opposition, the so-called interdistrict group, was led by E. Pylaeva, O. Ryvkin, and E. Leske.<sup>60</sup>

The exact origins of the Narva-Peterhof youth organization remain unclear, clouded by the mythology that has surrounded both the SSRM, direct predecessor of the Komsomol, and "Vasia" Alekseev. Since 1917, youth activists and historians of the movement have tried to put as much ideological distance between *Trud i svet* and the Socialist League as possible. Yet striking similarities did exist between the Narva-Peterhof and Vyborg district organizations. The Narva-Peterhof organization, like Vyborg's, drew its basic support from young metal workers, mainly those employed at the Putilov plant and shipyard. The organizations defined similar political, economic, and cultural tasks for themselves, even if their emphasis differed. The political composition of the members of both groups, though skewed toward the most radical parties, was nonetheless diverse. Both enjoyed Bolshevik support. Despite the efforts of Soviet historians to discredit *Trud i svet* as a "bourgeois" organization, it had the backing of such Bolshevik leaders as Krupskaja and Chugurin from the start.<sup>61</sup> The Narva-Peterhof organization, however, identified itself with the Bolshevik party earlier than did its Vyborg counterpart, although the Vyborg organization also redefined its political identity after June.<sup>62</sup> Young Bolsheviks, especially Vasilii Alekseev, played a more prominent role in the radicalization of the Narva organization, which they guided and controlled more effectively than did the young Bolsheviks in Vyborg.

Among the major activists in both the Narva-Peterhof and Vyborg district organizations were a number of anarchists whose contribution to the nascent movement is usually ignored by Soviet historians. Mikhail Kuznetsov and Pavel Burmistrov helped organize the Vyborg district organization and later were instrumental in redefining its political position. Their counterpart in Narva-Peterhof was I. Zernov, who first headed that district's organization. A well-read worker in the shrapnel shop at Putilov, the dedicated Zernov enjoyed great authority among the plant's young workers. Early in the organization's development, however, the Bolshevik district committee assigned Vasia Alekseev the task of strengthening Bolshevik influence within the district's youth organization. At that point, a number of Bolsheviks entered the organization, a development that displeased Zernov. One of them, Ivan Tiutikov, replaced Zernov as leader.<sup>63</sup> With Alekseev's backing, the Narva organization excluded



not just Zernov, but members of other political parties as well.<sup>64</sup> Soon Bolsheviks, headed by Alekseev, created a bloc that became the organization's guiding force.

A turner by profession, Alekseev, like his father before him, had begun his working life at the Putilov works. Although not a founder of the youth movement, Alekseev had become active in it by April, when he began to organize meetings of young workers in the different factories in his district. The slight-framed Alekseev combined unbounded energy and a sense of humor.<sup>65</sup> By far the senior member of the Bolshevik bloc (he was twenty-one at the time and had been active in the Bolshevik party since the beginning of the war), Alekseev imparted a sense of discipline and purpose to his group. All speeches and reports presented by the other Bolshevik members had to obtain his approval beforehand.<sup>66</sup> It was not uncommon for Alekseev, an experienced agitator and an avid reader, to spend two or three hours coaching a young Bolshevik, preparing him to debate political rivals.<sup>67</sup>

In July Andrei Afanas'ev, the youth deputy to the Peterhof district Soviet, informed a general meeting that the district's youth organization had worked out a charter with the help of the Bolshevik activist, M. M. Kharitonov.<sup>68</sup> When the Narva-Peterhof organization adopted its charter, some members rejected it because of the sponsorship of Kharitonov, Alekseev, and other Bolsheviks. At that point, members of other political parties left the district organization.

Much less is known about the second opposition group, the *mezhrayonnyi* or interdistrict organization, headed by Elizaveta Pylaeva and Eduard Leske. A Bolshevik metal worker, Leske played a central role in the early Bolshevik youth movement. A worker since the age of ten, Leske was an intelligent, self-educated, politically active, and enormously popular youth leader. Of strong body, Leske showed a great capacity for work and channeled his energies into obtaining funds and materials for the district organizations, and other organizational and agitational activities.

One of the few women active in the leadership of the early youth movement, Pylaeva had moved to Petrograd from her provincial town during the war. She worked as a cashier for a crystal and china retailer until 1917 when she began to work full time for the Bolshevik party. A party member prior to the February Revolution, the nineteen-year-old Pylaeva performed clerical and bookkeeping duties in the offices of *Pravda* and *Soldatskaia Pravda*. After July, she

became assistant to the secretary of the Party's Petrograd Committee. Pylaeva had not participated in the youth movement at the factory level. Through her brother, Georgii, a prominent Petrograd Bolshevik, Pylaeva had been introduced into the highest echelons of Party politics; Lenin's sister, Maria Ulianova, had recommended Liza for Party membership. In the next few months Pylaeva would serve as an important link between the youth movement's central body and the Party's Petrograd Committee.<sup>69</sup>

Young radicals created an interdistrict (*mezhraionnyi*) committee in late June. The secondary literature says nothing about the group's political affiliation, but their name suggests an affinity with the *Mezhraiontsy*, the political group headed by Trotsky, that included such luminaries as Uritskii and Lunacharskii. In early July Alekseev invited a *mezhraionets*, Mikhail Glebov, to inform the Narva-Peterhof organization that an interdistrict group had been created to call a citywide conference of young workers. In July Trotsky's group merged with the Bolshevik party; this coincides with the initiative taken by young *mezhraiontsy* to forge links with such young Bolsheviks as Alekseev, Pylaeva, and the pro-Bolshevik Narva group. According to Skorinko, at that point Alekseev "gravitated towards the *Mezhraiontsy*."<sup>70</sup>

On 1 July the interdistrict group hosted its first public meeting at the Cirque Moderne. A nervous Pylaeva introduced the speakers: Rakhia, Slutskii, and Kharitonov. Within two weeks the new organization had a modest 300 members, mainly older youths who concentrated their energies on the fight for voting rights. Soon thereafter, the interdistrict and Narva organizations, together with representatives from the Nevskii, Petrograd, Kolomna, and Vasilevskii district organizations, created an organizational bureau to call a citywide conference in August. (Those district organizations had seceded from *Trud i svet*.) It is evident that Alekseev and his supporters intended for the interdistrict committee to become a rival to *Trud i svet*'s All-City Council. The interdistrict committee would serve as the directing organ for a new, pro-Bolshevik SSRM.<sup>71</sup>

Aware that the dissidents had been conducting a propaganda campaign in the factories in preparation for the August conference, Driazgov and other *Trud i svet* activists began to agitate. The success of the Vyborg activists with their organization explains their loyalty to *Trud i svet*. In radical Vyborg young workers had achieved representation on the Bolshevik-led factory committees and district soviet, had won educational benefits, and in many factories had

attained the six-hour day. With the exception of Peterhof and Petrograd districts, the youth organization was not as successful in other districts. In practice the Vyborg activists had attained the same economic and political demands that the SSRM now posited as its official program. That *Trud i svet's* charter and manifesto reflected neither their concrete achievements nor their political aspirations was less important than the fact that they had created an organization capable of unifying all young workers. Rivalry among districts also inspired the *vyborzhtsy* to resist the new charter. The Vyborg rank and file saw the opposition as outsiders. The Narva-Peterhof organization had never integrated itself fully into *Trud i svet* and yet, in July and August, these "intruders" seemed to be tearing the Vyborg-based organization apart.<sup>72</sup> In the end, they decided to attend the city conference, to which they had been invited, to defend their organization. But their efforts were in vain, for the gathering served as a founding conference for a rival Socialist youth organization.

The conference, which met for three days, was held at the Narva-Peterhof Bolshevik party headquarters. *Trud i svet* activists from Vyborg district, who made up over half of the delegates to the conference, expressed much hostility to the efforts to create a new citywide organization. After scuffles between the two groups, a *mezhraionets*, Eduard Leske, was elected as the SSRM's first chairman and activists from the Narva organization and the interdistrict group made up the majority of the new citywide committee. Burmistrov was the only major figure from *Trud i svet* in the new body; an anarchist, he was also the sole non-Bolshevik.<sup>73</sup>

The SSRM's charter and program reflected the movement's growing militance (see Appendix 3).<sup>74</sup> As its primary task, the SSRM sought to develop the members' class consciousness and prepare them to fight for Socialism. The organization also planned to raise their cultural level and protect their economic, political, and legal interests. Basically, the SSRM documents reiterated the goals stated in *Trud i svet's* charter but in much greater detail. Some of the concrete positions of the SSRM included the six-hour day for minors under the age of sixteen, the establishment of a minimum wage for youth, and voting rights for eighteen-year-olds. The SSRM effectively incorporated the demands of young workers into their program, denoting a degree of political astuteness lacking in its predecessor. This change reflected both the organizational experience youth activists acquired in the preceding weeks and, perhaps, a greater

degree of help from adults in the articulation of specific goals.

The specificity of the SSRM Charter carried with it elements of inflexibility. Despite the vaguer statement of the economic rights of youth, Trud i svet's commitment to turn its members into advocates for their own interests reflects a more dynamic view of its mission than the SSRM's program. By specifying its tasks, the SSRM seemed to see them as static and did not make provisions for adjusting those tasks to future needs. The SSRM defined class consciousness as political awareness attained through education: lectures, discussions, and reading materials provided by the organization. For the authors of the Trud i svet Charter, class consciousness was broader; it meant acquiring knowledge in many fields, becoming the advocate of one's rights, and aspiring to personal dignity.

To accomplish their goals, both Trud i svet and the SSRM set up hierarchical structures of decision-making and power, but the SSRM structure concentrated more power in the highest organs. The older structure assured links between the decision-making organs and the district committees by requiring that each district send its four highest elected officers to the council. Trud i svet had required a greater degree of participation on the part of All-District Council members than that required by the SSRM. Trud i svet council meetings could not be considered plenipotentiary unless one-half of its members attended. In contrast, the SSRM required only one-third of the Petrograd Committee members to be present, and if an insufficient number attended, they could call a second meeting, which would be considered plenipotentiary irrespective of attendance. The weaker links between the Petrograd Committee and the SSRM district committees would result in a crisis by early 1918, when the district committees virtually disintegrated while the Petrograd Committee continued to function.

One of the most significant changes in the charter and program of the two youth organizations was ideological in nature. The SSRM planned to establish libraries and reading rooms where members would have access exclusively to Socialist literature. But by "Socialist" the SSRM leadership understood only the radical, pro-Bolshevik wing of socialism. The SSRM Charter acknowledged the organization's Bolshevik orientation by announcing its intention to join the Swiss-based Youth International, the ideological predecessor of the Communist Youth International (KIM).<sup>75</sup>

The political redefinition of the youth movement took its toll. It is estimated that in the summer Trud i svet's membership had



reached 50,000. By the end of the August Conference, the SSRM had 13,000 members. In all likelihood, there were groups that, like the *vyborzhtsy*, rejected the transformation of the movement.<sup>76</sup> Yet many of the reluctant groups had joined the SSRM by the time of the October insurrection. By then, the SSRM had regained a substantial number of the movement's followers; its membership was between 20,000 and 32,000.<sup>77</sup>

In forcing the movement's political redefinition, the more radical sectors of the youth movement had taken a calculated risk. In their estimation, the internal contradictions within the movement had come to a head during a particularly auspicious moment in the general workers' movement. The movement's redefinition coincided with the general radicalization of large sectors of the working class. So far we have looked at the internal dynamics of the youth movement. Now, we shall examine two external factors that were equally important: the convergence of the youth movement and the workers' movement and the role played by the Bolshevik party in the movement's political redefinition.

### **Organized Youth, the Workers' Movement, and the Bolshevik Party**

Individual Bolshevik leaders supported the nascent youth movement in Vyborg and in other city districts. In April Chugurin had encouraged the budding cadre of Vyborg activists as they expanded their organizational drive beyond the first few factories. Other adult Bolshevik leaders involved themselves with the movement: M. M. Kharitonov, A. K. Skorokhodov, A. S. Kuklin, V. N. Kaiurov, G. N. Pylaev, and, especially, N. K. Krupskaja. Yet in the spring of 1917 the Bolshevik party lacked a coherent policy toward the youth movement. The policy that the Party developed out of the contact of its individual members with the movement reflected the lessons that the leaders had drawn from that contact.

Krupskaja became the symbol of Bolshevik support for the youth movement. She attended the earliest mass meetings of young factory workers, and dedicated many articles to the need for an organization to fight for the economic interests and professional training of young workers, and for universal education based on class solidarity.<sup>78</sup> By May Krupskaja expressed concern that, under the pretext of "neutrality," conservative sectors sought to divert the movement



away from the Bolshevik Party. At the highest point in Shevtsov's popularity, Krupskaja called on the youth movement to reconsider its political allegiance.<sup>79</sup> A few days after the All-City Council's approval of *Trud i svet's* manifesto, she published an organizational blueprint intended to serve as an alternative to that document.<sup>80</sup>

Krupskaja's vision of the youth movement derived from her proximity to the Vyborg organization. She had been elected to that district's duma and worked primarily with the district's department of education, the Committee for the Relief of Soldiers' Wives, and the youth organization. Krupskaja expressed her trust in the capacity of the masses in general, and young workers in particular, to establish and run their own institutions.<sup>81</sup> In her report at Party's Second City Conference in July, she stressed that the paucity of Party activists within the youth organization had allowed the membership to accept a moderate leadership and line. She emphasized, however, that the class instinct of young workers, expressed in the growing opposition to both the movement's moderate leadership and its political line, would lead them to assume the correct position in the revolutionary struggle. She asked the Party to give organized youth more ideological guidance without curtailing the movement's autonomy.<sup>82</sup>

Krupskaja's was not the only vision of the youth movement among Bolsheviks. In the spring and summer of 1917 three positions emerged. Krupskaja stood for a broad, autonomous organization spiritually in solidarity with the Party. This position was challenged by some Party members, primarily from Moscow and Latvia, who favored a narrow organization of young Bolsheviks. The Moscow youth organization, the creation of the Bolshevik party's Moscow Committee, had not acquired a mass following. Samoilova, who represented the Moscow perspective, declared at the Sixth Party Congress in August that youth organizations should be treated "essentially as adjuncts to the Party. This way we will be assured that new cadres will be formed under our influence and direct leadership."<sup>83</sup> Samoilova implied that a small, Party-sponsored organization was preferable to the Petrograd mass organization over which the Party had no formal control.<sup>84</sup> Kharitonov and Alekseev stood for a third, intermediate position that advocated an autonomous mass organization that would, nevertheless, express a more definite commitment to the Bolshevik line. The controversy revolved around the issue of Party control over the youth organization and reflected the proponents' experiences with the movement, as well as conflicting interpretations of the interaction between the Party and

mass organizations outside Party confines.

Whereas Krupskaja's position seemed to have been dominant through July, in August the delegates to the Sixth Party Congress rejected both Krupskaja's and Samoilova's positions, adopting Kharitonov's and Alekseev's as the basis for the Party resolution on organized youth. They advocated a less autonomous organization than the model envisaged by Krupskaja. At the Second City Conference Kharitonov had joined Krupskaja in opposing the creation of a new organizational center on the grounds that it might split and decimate the movement. Yet at the Sixth Congress it was understood that a new center would be created. With Kharitonov's support, the Party came to back the effort spearheaded by the Narva-Peterhof youth organization against its Vyborg rival. Two weeks later, the Socialist League emerged as the city organization.

Krupskaja's reaction to these changes remains a mystery. Two days before the first SSRM Conference she instructed organizers in Vyborg to create Red Guard detachments in four factories in that district. The request was issued through Kuznetsov, the anarchist chairman of Trud i svet's Vyborg committee.<sup>85</sup> Clearly, neither Krupskaja nor the Vyborg activists foresaw the demise of Trud i svet. It is possible that the youth committees continued to function as they did in the spring and summer. But the movement had in fact acquired a new governing organ at the citywide level that now carried the Party's seal of approval.

A dual process manifested itself in the redefinition of the movement: a particular sector within the Party coincided with that sector of the youth movement that had its base primarily in Narva-Peterhof.<sup>86</sup> Most likely, the most radical sectors, led by such Bolsheviks as Alekseev, exerted pressure on Party leaders and influenced the formulation of the official Party line on the youth movement. At the same time, many Bolshevik leaders supported the ideological and organizational redefinition of the youth movement as the transformation of a politically undefined class effort into a conscious, purposeful organization, which, above all, had a clear party allegiance. Many in the Petrograd Committee, even Krupskaja herself, feared that the independent Trud i svet would be manipulated by other political parties against the Bolsheviks. In the short run, the ideological transformation would ensure that the organization remained a reliable political ally in the struggle against the Provisional Government. In the long run, the organization would be responsible for the political and ideological training of Russian youth

under Party auspices.

Nonetheless, the birth and early stages of the Socialist youth movement took place outside party structures.<sup>87</sup> When Alekseev asked the delegates to the Sixth Party Congress to help finance a youth newspaper, he depicted the movement and the political realignment within it as self-sufficient and independent.<sup>88</sup> Although the defenders of the SSRM advanced the position of a given sector within the Party, they, like their counterparts in *Trud i svet*, were, above all, workers who represented other young workers like themselves. Inspired by the events of 1917, they created their own organization to express their support for the Revolution and to champion their own economic and cultural demands.

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Each important stage of the youth movement-- its emergence, definition, and realignment --corresponded to a crucial stage in the development of the Revolution. The same factories that had served as the backbone of the strike movement spawned the youth movement in the spring of 1917.<sup>89</sup> Like the wave of popular discontent that swept Miliukov and Guchkov from office in April, the movement had been a spontaneous effort; the participants had not responded to the initiative of political parties.<sup>90</sup>

The tensions in the political life of Petrograd --a Socialist leadership that the working class had come to perceive as too moderate --heightened within the youth movement.<sup>91</sup> In April and May the Vyborg-based *Trud i svet*, a politically independent radical organization, came under the leadership of Petr Shevtsov. His ascendancy reflected both the inexperience of the young organizers, most of whom were more radical than he, and the political independence of the first youth organization. At the level of the factory and district Soviet, organized youth pressed for greater political and economic power, while the movement's leadership asked for vague improvements in their material, political, and cultural situation. In mid-June the debates on *Trud i svet*'s charter began to undermine Shevtsov's position at the district level. Shevtsov isolated himself when he chastised the youth leaders for their participation in the July insurrection.

At the end of July the factory-based youth movement moved closer to the Bolsheviks and repudiated the more moderate line of

Trud i svet. The Bolsheviks, who stressed local work, were gaining control over the local Soviets, the Interdistrict Conference, and those institutions closest to the workers and most sensitive to their demands.<sup>92</sup> Though Party membership stopped growing in the weeks after the July Days, the blow proved to be superficial and, by the end of that month, the Bolsheviks began to regain their popularity at the district level. In the same week that the SSRM was founded, the Bolsheviks came in an impressive second in the elections to the Petrograd City Duma.<sup>93</sup>

As the youth movement became radicalized, many moderate elements withdrew from the movement. Like many other working-class institutions, the youth organization had begun to lose members by late summer. Probably, the most dedicated and politically committed radicals remained active and facilitated the movement's polarization and redefinition. The Bolshevik party owed its growing popularity to the capacity of its leadership, particularly at the grass roots, to articulate and champion the demands of radicalized sectors of the working class. Ironically, that successful articulation took place at the expense of the autonomy of organized youth.

The long-term implications of this loss of autonomy would not become apparent until the end of the Civil War period, when the youth organization came to resemble Samoilova's narrower vision rather than Krupskaja's autonomous mass organization. By 1920 the Communist party intervened directly in the internal affairs of the youth organization as well as directed its ideological line. This outcome was by no means predetermined in the development of the organized youth movement in 1917. There were conflicting views both within the movement and within the Bolshevik party with regards to the autonomy of the youth organization. But the Civil War tended to undermine pluralistic elements within Russia's political life as a whole and within the youth movement in particular. In reality, the youth leadership had always seen the movement as 'working class' first and 'youth' second. In times of emergency, the youth organization was not seen as imperative. Beginning in late August of 1917, young workers would give their energies to the Red Guards, and later, to the Red Army.

As the independent, organized expression of young workers, the youth movement was viable only in very specific circumstances. The subsequent collapse of the Russian economy, unemployment, the mass exodus from the city, hunger and disease, and, especially, the



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participation of youth in the armed defense of the Revolution decimated the SSRM's rank and file by the beginning of 1918. This decimation, together with the social and political realities of the Civil War, altered the character of the youth organization. In the fall of 1918, eighteen months after its birth, the Petrograd organization joined other groups in the country to found the Communist Youth League (Komsomol). The creation of the Komsomol marked the demise of the youth movement as the autonomous, organized expression of young workers. By then the organization had been transformed into an institution representing all youth (though with a definite working-class ethos) and, in many ways, a youth auxiliary of the Communist party.



## NOTES

1. Grigorii Driazgov, *Na puti k komsomolu* (Leningrad 1924), 35. All dates will be given in old-style (Julian calendar).
2. Zakharii V. Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda v period podgotovki i provedeniia oktiabr'skogo vooruzhennogo vosstaniia*, (Leningrad: Nauka, 1965), 25-26.
3. Ibid., 36.
4. Substantially lower estimates of the participation of youth in Petrograd's industrial labor force appear in *Istoriia rabochikh Petrograda*. According to that study youth accounted for 8.2 percent of the work force or 31,800 workers. This figure includes only children and adolescents up to seventeen years of age, and excludes the numerically important eighteen to twenty sub-group. The reduction of the proportion of youths in the work force has ideological implications and illustrates the Soviet emphasis on the preservation of "cadre" workers (skilled, adult males) within the war-time work force and the de-emphasis on the less skilled, less politically developed sectors, including youth. A. R. Dzemishevich, ed., *Istoriia rabochikh Petrograda*, vol. II (Leningrad, 1972), 13.
5. For substantially lower figures see, I. P. Leiberov and O. I. Shkaratan, "K voprosu o sostave petrogradskikh promyshlennykh rabochikh v 1917 g.," *Voprosy istorii*, vol. I (1961): 50-54; O. I. Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia v sotsial'nom sostave fabrichno-zavodskikh rabochikh Leningrada (1917-1928)," *Istoriia SSSR*, vol. V (1959): 22.
6. Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 36, 49. See also A. N. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe znamia: soiuzy rabochei molodezhi v Petrograde v 1917 godu*, (Leningrad, 1958), 43; G. Driazgov, *Zapiski komsomol'tsa* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1930), 105; I. Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, ed. P. F. Kudelli, (Leningrad, 1926), 27; P. Burmistrov, "Vospominaniia," *Za piat' let*, ed. M. Udalov and O. Ryvkin (Petrograd, 1922), 54; Evgeniia Gerr, *Na puti k millionam: ocherki o istorii iunoshevskogo dvizheniia v Rossii* (Moscow, 1925), 12.
7. Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 37-38.
8. Stephen A. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution and the Factories, 1917-1918*, (Cambridge, 1983), 24.
9. This estimate is based on figures by Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 34-38 and Dzemishevich, *Istoriia rabochikh*, 12-13. See also Smith, *Red Petrograd*, 23-25.
10. G. Driazgov, *Na puti k komsomolu*, 11; Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 43.
11. Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 30.
12. Burmistrov, "Vospominaniia," 55.
13. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 43; Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 52.
14. Koenker, "Urban Families, Working Class Youth Groups, and the 1917 Revolution in Moscow," *The Family in Imperial Russia*, ed. D. Ransell (Chicago, 1976), 282-87. Though Koenker bases her study on Moscow youth, the characteristics she describes apply to the corresponding age and class cohort in Petrograd. See also Smith, *Red Petrograd*, 6.
15. Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 38.
16. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *The February Revolution: Petrograd, 1917*, (Seattle,

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1980), 83.

17. Ibid.

18. I. Skorinko, *Molodezh' v bor'be za oktiabr'*, (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926), 7-8.

19. Kudelli, *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 4.

20. Ibid., 8; Skorinko, "Iz vospominaii," 10-13; G. Driazgov and Shidlovskii, eds., *Odin iz osnovateliei Komsomola: Vasia Alekseev* (Leningrad, 1926), 56-57; Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy Oktiabria* (Leningrad, 1925), 17; Iu. S. Afanas'ev, E. Ia. Remizova, and Z. M. Ivanova, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii VLKSM*, (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1969), 15.

21. V. Vasiliev, "Moi tovarishch Vasia Alekseev," *Iunost'*, XI (1956): 98-100.

22. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 7-10, 33-55.

23. Ibid., 61-63.

24. Hasegawa, *February Revolution*, 219.

25. M. Zhiv and V. Kulikov, *Rozhdenie Komsomola: vznikovenie Leningradskogo Komsomola* (Leningrad-Moscow, 1933), 125-26.

26. Skorinko, *Molodezh' v bor'be*, 7-8; Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 68.

27. G. Driazgov, "Fevral'skie dni," in A. Kirov, ed., *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, vol. I (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), 257-8.

28. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 63.

29. A. Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia VLKSM* (Moscow, 1928), 39.

30. G. Driazgov, *Na puti*, 34-36; E. Gerr, "Pervaia svobodnaia maevka rabochei molodezhi Pitera," *Molodoi kommunist*, 1957, no. IV, 46.

31. Driazgov, "Po proidennomu puti," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 40-42. The group included A. Metelkin, P. Burmistrov, and [?] Freiburg from Russian Renault, G. Driazgov, K. Surkov, and N. Timofeev from New Parviainen, S. Egorov from New Lessner, M. Kuznetsov and Ia. Iakovlev from Erikson, and V. Sokolov from Baranovskii. 32.

Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 74. Burmistrov, "Vospominaniia," 52. O. Ryvkin, "Iz moikh vospominanii," *Molodaia gvardiia*, 1928, 173.

33. S. N. Valk, ed., *Raionnye sovety Petrograda v 1917 godu*, vol. I (Moscow-Leningrad, 1964), 97.

34. *Raionnye sovety*, vol. III, p. 17; vol. II, p. 151; vol. I, p. 128; Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 72-73.

35. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 74; I. Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii petrogradskogo komsomol'tsa," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 15.

36. Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii," 15. Metelkin chaired this meeting.

37. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 92-94; *Pravda*, 16 April 1917.

38. P. Burmistrov, "Trud i svet," *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, vol. I, ed. A. Kirov (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), 138-39. Burmistrov pointed out that the resisting factory committees were dominated by Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. For other examples of early resistance, see the complaint lodged by youth organizers with the Petrograd district Soviet in May. In July youth representatives at the Putilov shipyard encountered resistance from management and the factory committee. See *Raionnye sovety*, vol. III, p. 36; vol. II, pp. 207 and 245. For Putilov, see Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii," 16-19; Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy oktiabr'ia*, (Leningrad, 1925), 28; Smith, *Red Petrograd*, 198-200.

39. Smith, *Red Petrograd*, 199.

40. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 105; Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii," 27; Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia*, 41; Burmistrov, "Vospominaniia," 54; E. Gerr, *Na puti k millionam*, 12; Driazgov, "Po proidennomu puti," 46; M. Kuznetsov, "Pervye organizatsionnye shagi,"

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*Leninskoe pokolenie*, 91.

41. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe znamia*; E. M. Tiazhel'nikov, ed., *Slavnyi put' Leninskogo Komsomola*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1974).

42. Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia*, 42; N. K. Krupskaia, "Soiuz molodezhi," *Pravda*, 27 May 1917, 2; Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 237; Driazgov, *Na puti*, 48. Atsarkin points out that a much lower number worked actively for the organization. Shevtsov himself put the number of active members at 8,000 to 9,000. P. Shevtsov, "Pis'mo k komsomol'tsam," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 149. For a denial of *Trud i svet's* mass character see the unsigned article "O iunosheskoi organizatsii 'Trud i svet'," *Molodoi kommunist*, 1957, no. VI, 118.

43. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 95; Kuznetsov, "Pervye organizatsionnye shagi," 92; Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii," 27.

44. See Appendix 1.

45. In a controversial article that re-examines *Trud i svet*, Atsarkin states that the call for armed defense of the Revolution was an addendum to Shevtsov's less militant opening statement put forth by the delegates. See A. N. Atsarkin, "Vozniknovenie soiuzov rabochei molodezhi v Petrograda i Moskve," *Voprosy istorii*, 1956, no. XII, 45.

46. P. Shevtsov, *Petrogradskaia proletarskaia iunosheskaia organizatsiia 'Trud i svet'* (Petrograd, 1917), 4; N. Fokin, "Kak eto bylo," *Za piat' let*, 64; Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy oktiabriia*, 47; Driazgov, *Na puti*, 40-41; Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 132. Driazgov differs slightly from Atsarkin and Skorinko; he lists thirty-nine members, sixteen of whom were active. This group included: A. Metelkin, M. Tsepkov, P. Burmistrov, M. Kuznetsov, and Driazgov from Vyborg; L. Faivilovich and T. Golubeva from Moscow district; A. Burmistrov and P. Smorodin from Petrograd district, and V. Alekseev from Narva-Peterhof.

47. Driazgov puts the membership at 16,000 in *Na puti*, 42; N. Fokin gives 15,000 in "Istoriia vozniknoveniia organizatsii molodezhi v Pitere. Vyborgskii raion," *Iunyi proletarii*, 1920, No. VIII, 7; Burmistrov gives the estimate of 15,000 to 18,000 in "Vospominaniia," 55.

48. Kuznetsov, "Pervye...shagi," 91.

49. Driazgov, *Na puti*, 59.

50. *Raionnye sovery*, vol. I, p. 97; vol. II, pp. 133, 149, 151; vol. III, pp. 17, 34, 35, 48.

51. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 114-18; Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 143.

52. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 143; Skorinko, "Iz vospominanii," 29-30.

53. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 104; L. Levenson, "Trud i svet," in *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 103.

54. Driazgov, "Po proidennomu puti," 49.

55. Driazgov, *Na puti*, 67; Driazgov and Shidlovskii, *Odin iz osnovateliei Komsomola: Vasia Alekseev*, 81.

56. Driazgov and Shidlovskii, *Odin*, 49-50.

57. *Ibid.*, 49, 61.

58. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 112, 142-43; Kuznetsov, "Pervye...shagi," 94.

59. Driazgov, "Po proidennomu puti," 52.

60. Technically the SSRM was organized in the municipal district of Peterhof. But until April 1917 Peterhof had been part of Narva district. The political parties treated the two administrative units as one in their political and organizational work. Often the memoirs refer to the political organizations in Peterhof (for example, those at the Putilov plant) as the Narva district organization, when officially Putilov was located in Peterhof. See *Raionnye sovery*, Vol. II, pp. 91-92.

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61. E. Gerr, "Pervaia svobodnaia maevka," 46-48; Atsarkin, "Voznikovenie," 38-39.
62. Levenson, "Trud i svet," 101-3.
63. Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy oktiabr'ia*, 32-34. I. Tiutikov, 29, 35, 60-61.
64. Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy*, 35.
65. Skorinko, "Vospominaniia," in *Odin iz osnovateliei*, 58; "Iz vospominanii," 20; E. Gerr, *Na puti v revoliutsiiu*, 18-19.
66. Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy*, 21. V. Alekseev had been active in the strike movement and in 1917 was elected deputy to the Petrograd Soviet.
67. Skorinko, "Vospominaniia," 59; Tiutikov, 30.
68. *Raionnye sovety*, Vol. II, 200-201.
69. For a description of Leske, see Evgeniia Gerr, *Na puti v revoliutsiiu*, 19. For Pylaeva, see Gerr, 20; Vadim Zubkov and Iurii Medvedev, "Liza Pylaeva," *Vozhaki Komsomola*, comp. S. Semanov, (Moscow, 1974), 5-19; Pylaeva's obituary in *Pravda*, 20 March 1926. Soviet historians have given Leske little credit for his important role in the youth movement because of his subsequent involvement in major controversy within the SSRM. They have been much kinder to his comrade, "Liza" Pylaeva.
70. Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy*, 46-47; *Molodezh' v bor'be za oktiabr'*, 33-35; E. Leske, "Kak my organizovali SSRM," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 107; Gerr, *Na puti v revoliutsiiu*, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), 10; Tiutikov, 30; M. Glebov, "Vospominaniia," in *Odin iz osnovateliei*, 74-76; Skorinko, *Komsomol'tsy*, 20; Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, (New York, 1976), 316n. Another possible link: Zinaida Bronshtein, Trotsky's daughter, was active in the SSRM and worked closely with Leske, a *mezhraionets*.
71. Leske, "Kak my organizovali," 108; Driazgov, "Po proidennomu," 55.
72. Fokin, "Kak eto bylo," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 65; Levenson, "Trud i svet," 98. For a discussion of district "patriotism" see Stephen Smith, *Red Petrograd*, 105.
73. The committee included E. Leske, V. Alekseev, M. Glebov, E. Gerr, O. Ryvkin, P. Smorodin, G. Katsovich, L. Levenson, and P. Burmistrov. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 40. Because of Leske's later participation in the first opposition within the SSRM, many of the memoirs do not give him credit for being the first chairman of the Bolshevik youth organization. For example, see Kuznetsov, "Pervye organizatsionnye shagi," 94; Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 147; Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 236; Driazgov, "O sostave 1-go Petrogradskogo Komiteta SSRM," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 71.
74. See Appendix 2. P. F. Kudelli, *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 66-69.
75. The allusions to the Party's direct role in the creation of the interdistrict organization date to the 1950s and are not found in other sources. The statement may reflect the desire to depict the Party as having played a more direct role than it actually did; however, it is plausible that the smaller 'mezhraionka' was in fact a Party-sponsored organization. See Atsarkin, "Voznikovenie," 46; "O iunosheskoii organizatsii, 'Trud i svet,'" *Molodoi kommunist*, 1957: no. VI, 121.
76. P. Smorodin, a conference organizer, gives a higher figure (16,000) in his "Vospominaniia," in *Za piat' let*, 48. See also Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 237; Tiazhelnikov, E. M., ed. *Slavnyi put' Leninskogo Komsomola*, (Moscow, 1974), 84; V. G. Zakharov, ed., *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS* (Leningrad, 1980), vol. I, 472; *Novaia zhizn'*, 3 October 1917; L. Trotsky, *A History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1977), 768.
77. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 144-50; Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 237.
78. N. K. Krupskaiia, "Neotlozhnaia zadacha rabochikh-okhrana truda detei i



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podrostkov," *Pravda*, 16 April 1917, 3-4.

79. Krupskaja, "Bor'ba za rabochuiu molodezh'," *Pravda*, 30 May 1917, 2-3.

80. Krupskaja, "Kak organizovat' rabochuiu molodezh'," *Pravda*, 30 May 1917, 2.

81. Krupskaja, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (New York, 1960), 360-62; R. T. Fisher, Jr., *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York, 1959), 6-7.

82. Istomol TsK RLKSM, Komissiiia po istorii iunosheskogo dvizheniia v Rossii, *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1924), 2d ed., 10-11.

83. *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 18.

84. For the discussion preceding the resolution see *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 19-22.

85. Kudelli, *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 77.

86. Pylaeva, Ryvkin, and Leske were from the relatively small First City district organization. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 34.

87. Krupskaja characterized Trud i svet members as unaffiliated or "non-party" socialists in her article, "Proletarskii soiuz rabochei molodezhi letom 1917 goda," *Iunyi kommunist*, 1933, no. IX, 44.

88. Atsarkin, *Pod bol'shevitskoe*, 219.

89. The factories involved were Baranovskii, Parviainen, New Lessner, and Erikson. Leiberov and Shkaratan, "K voprosu o sostave," 42-58; Stepanov, *Rabochie Petrograda*, 25-45; Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia v sotsial'nom sostave," 21-38; G. L. Sobolev, *Revolutsionnoe soznanie rabochikh i soldat Petrograda v 1917 g (period dvoevlastiia)* (Leningrad, 1973), 123-25; Hasegawa, *The February Revolution*, 101; Dzemishevich, *Istoriia rabochikh*, 16.

90. Trotsky, *Russian Revolution*, 352.

91. Marc Ferro, *October, 1917: A Social History of the Russian Revolution*, trans. N. Stone (London, 1980), 182, 274-75; Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, xxxi, 8.

92. W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1935), vol. I, 266.

93. Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power*, 159.





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## The Crisis of the Socialist League of Young Workers and the Founding of the Komsomol

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In January 1918 four young men and two women rented an apartment on the fashionable Dvorianskaia (Grazhdanskaia) Street, near the Mariinsky Palace. Friends and comrades, all were youth activists, members of the Socialist League of Young Workers (SSRM). They wanted to found a commune with the improbable aim of providing young workers a living example of people totally committed to their political beliefs. With their enthusiasm and experience in the movement, they hoped to inject energy into a dying organization. Through this well-meant if unsuccessful attempt the group sought to rekindle the political ferment that had brought forth the organized youth movement the previous spring.<sup>1</sup>

Barely five months had passed since the SSRM's founding conference. The organization, born of a disruptive split within the Socialist youth movement, had no time to develop its membership, activities, and organizational structure before it was beset by a series of crises. The factory collectives, the backbone of the youth movement, were disintegrating, victims of the rampant unemployment that afflicted Petrograd's labor force in the months after the October Revolution. The members of the Dvorianskaia commune, like many youth activists, felt powerless before the economic crisis and, worse, before the precipitous decline in the SSRM's membership. They were deeply disappointed at the inactivity and apathy that was sapping the life of their once vital organization. The six activists staged one of several efforts to adapt the SSRM to new conditions that were threatening the organization's very existence. Led by the chairman of the Petrograd Committee, Eduard Leske, the group became the first internal opposition within the pro-Bolshevik youth movement.

## **The Crisis of the Socialist League of Young Workers**

The emergence of this opposition was symptomatic of the intense discussions that surrounded the transformation of the SSRM. From a spontaneous, broad coalition of young radicals who struggled for economic, civil, and political rights, the youth league was becoming an exclusive, smaller body of youths committed to the Bolshevik party and less concerned with its membership's economic and cultural demands than with the need to provide military and ideological support to the embattled new state. This transformation proved to be a painful process for many of those still active in the movement. There was no consensus on the strategy to be developed for those difficult times. Conflicting sectors within the SSRM leadership promoted differing visions of the organization and, in doing so, debilitated the League further.

In its first year, the SSRM gradually redefined its forms of mass work to conform not only to its diminishing membership but also to the country's economic and political realities. The League had to come to terms with the political disengagement that decimated its ranks and the lack of continuity within the movement. Just as important, the youth leadership had to clarify the League's role within the new state and society and to restructure its organizational apparatus and practice to conform to its new functions. Shortly before the first anniversary of the October Revolution, the SSRM joined its Moscow counterpart to co-sponsor the founding congress of the Komsomol. That congress confirmed the decisions that the SSRM had put into practice in the previous months.

### **The SSRM after the First City Conference**

On 8 October 1917, five weeks after the First City Conference, the members of the SSRM's Petrograd Committee met with one hundred young activists from the city's factories to discuss the loss of members and the organization's tasks. Apparently, sectors of the rank and file wished to pursue economic tasks while part of the leadership insisted that the SSRM was not an economic organization. The rank and file exerted pressure and the gathering approved a project to create factory youth committees that would have full responsibility for regulating relations between young workers and management on such questions as salaries, working conditions, hours, hiring, and firing. The committees would be responsible for enacting and overseeing a series of educational and cultural programs, such as

factory schools, libraries, and lecture series.<sup>2</sup> The Narva activist, V. Alekseev, favored these new factory collectives as a way of ensuring the organization's working-class following. Though Alekseev and other youth leaders made a point of denying that the SSRM was an economic institution, its primary concerns at this early stage revolved around the working situation of its youthful rank and file.<sup>3</sup>

Drafted by Oskar Ryvkin, the project approved by the gathering sought to define the SSRM's relation to the trade unions. The project endorsed what later became the subject of an intense controversy: the creation of special youth sections within the trade unions. The sections would influence decisions affecting young workers and collect information to be used in formulating policy. The SSRM also wanted representation in the negotiation of collective agreements, and in the Trade Union Council, the Central Council of Factory Committees, and the individual factory committees.<sup>4</sup> At that point, then, the SSRM saw itself as a lobby within central working-class institutions and as a watchdog at the factory level. This vision reflected the SSRM's factory origins and the pressure that the base still exerted on the youth movement.

In the fall of 1917 Vyborg had the most successful youth organization in the city. Two youth representatives, V. Sokolov and Vasiliev, sat on the district Soviet.<sup>5</sup> In response to the organization's pressure many of the district's factories adopted the six-hour day for young workers.<sup>6</sup> Though the organization still lacked a regular meeting place and its factory collectives continued to encounter resistance from some factory committees, the Vyborg youth organization constituted a force within the district's economic and political life.<sup>7</sup>

The organization's combativeness around economic issues was manifest when the youth committee at the Nevskiaia Cotton Mill locked horns with the factory administration over enforcement of the six-hour day. To counter the administration's claim that a reduction of the work day of young assistants would disrupt production at the factory, the youth committee worked out a plan with staggered shifts whereby adult workers were guaranteed uninterrupted access to young assistants throughout the regular eight-hour work day.<sup>8</sup> When the administration rejected this plan, the youth committee turned to the Petrograd regional Commissar of Labor for redress.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, this struggle was waged by textile workers, which suggests that the SSRM's membership was changing. With its strength among young metal workers, the League had had a weak presence among textile

workers the preceding spring and summer.

The success of the Vyborg branch was the exception in the SSRM. Vyborg's was the only organization that did not complain of disruptive losses in its membership in the pages of the SSRM's journal, *lunyi proletarii*. Judging by the youth press and memoirs of participants, no other district organization had such an active economic program. Though economic conditions had worsened substantially, Vyborg's young workers continued to press for the implementation of basic demands. The capacity of the Vyborg branch to wage economic struggles probably accounted for its survival.

The organizations in Narva and Petrograd districts were less successful than Vyborg's. The Narva organization collapsed after the First City Conference. It renewed its work in November. Attributing its problem to lack of funds, the organization had not developed activities by the end of the year.<sup>10</sup> One of its branches, the collective at the Putilov shipyard, carried out some work but complained that of the 2,000 young employees at the shipyard, it had been able to organize only 320. Of those, only 10 percent attended meetings regularly.<sup>11</sup> The Petrograd district branch fared worse. One of the most successful branches within *Trud i svet*, this district organization had enjoyed the support of many factory committees and the district Soviet. The political redefinition of the movement in August had taken a severe toll: when the committee called a general meeting to discuss the realignment of 2,500 members, only 70 to 80 attended. The theft of 2,000 rubles from the organization's coffers by its officers further weakened the organization's status in the eyes of the membership and the adult workers who had supported it.<sup>12</sup>

The district organizations of Vyborg, Narva, and Petrograd were more fortunate than others.<sup>13</sup> In the following months the SSRM's local organizations virtually disappeared. Beginning in the summer of 1917, the youth organization experienced a growing demobilization or deactivation of its membership from which it would not recover until the end of the Civil War. Of the 50,000 members that the organized youth movement boasted in the spring of 1917, fewer than 1,500 remained a year later.<sup>14</sup> To stem the loss of members became the overriding concern of the SSRM leadership from the fall of 1917 and through most of the following year.



## Disengagement and Political Apathy

Two major factors account for the SSRM's loss of membership. First and foremost, the Russian economy, especially its war industry, began to collapse in the fall of 1917; this resulted in mass unemployment and the exodus of workers from Petrograd. Second, those activists who remained in the city were often absorbed by the Red Guards or other working-class institutions. These factors left their imprint on the institutions that the working class had erected in the spring and summer of 1917. The SSRM was no exception.

Nine-tenths of Petrograd's industries produced almost totally for the war effort.<sup>15</sup> In the months immediately after October, the government began to reorganize industry for non-military production. But these efforts were hindered by such major impediments as the collapse of transportation, fuel shortages, lack of raw materials, a drop in the available industrial capital, and the high cost of wage labor in proportion to the decline in per capita productivity. Between November 1917 and April 1918 over 150 enterprises shut down. More than half of these were metal works.<sup>16</sup> Some of these were evacuated from Petrograd for military reasons. Most simply stopped production. Because the city government reduced the number of hours during which it offered electric power, those factories that continued to operate had to shorten their work weeks to four days for larger and two days for the smaller factories.

Within a few months the number of employed industrial workers plummeted. By 1 January 1918, 77.3 percent of Petrograd's 1917 work force was still employed. But by April only 41.9 percent of the 1917 work force was employed, and the figure dropped to 30.3 percent by October of 1918.<sup>17</sup> The first factories to close down were the smaller and ill-equipped ones; but the overwhelming majority of unemployed workers came from large enterprises, especially metal works. By April metal workers had been reduced to 24-30 percent of their 1917 participation in the work force. By comparison, 80 percent of the textile workers still retained their jobs.<sup>18</sup> This would explain why the youth collective at the Nevskiaia cotton mill survived and remained combative. Though attempts were made to use criteria of work experience and family responsibilities to determine which workers would be laid off, such massive dismissals severely affected all categories of workers.<sup>19</sup> Young workers and women suffered most severely. By April only 32.7 percent of young workers and 46.2 percent of women workers remained in the work

force as compared to 58.5 percent of adult males who retained their jobs.<sup>20</sup>

The high levels of unemployment, fuel shortages, the unavailability of basic necessities, and the rapid deterioration of living conditions resulted in a mass exodus from Petrograd. Over half the population had left by June 1918.<sup>21</sup> Those who stayed faced hunger and disease, which took the life of one in every ten Petrograder between 1918 and 1920.<sup>22</sup> The first half of 1918 brought breadless days to much of the population, especially after the German takeover of the grain-producing Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> The average caloric intake per day fell to under two thousand calories per adult.<sup>24</sup> Given the low supply, bread prices skyrocketed while workers' real wages plunged to about 36 percent of the 1917 levels.<sup>25</sup> Houses fell into disrepair, often lacking such amenities as heat and, in those that had it, running water.

Though the mass exodus of Petrograd workers drained working-class organizations of their base and affected the development of revolutionary institutions, the roots of disengagement had more complex origins. The drop in the membership of the youth movement coincided with the widespread apathy that characterized the working-class movement in general, a phenomenon widely acknowledged by historians of the Revolution.<sup>26</sup> David Mandel, looking at the phenomenon as it began in the late summer of 1917, attributes the inactivity in Petrograd to the general alienation of the more radical workers from those moderate institutions that had ceased to reflect their aspiration for definitive action.<sup>27</sup> Several issues can be isolated as representative of the youth movement which may illuminate the more general picture of workers' disengagement from popular organizations.

First, the spontaneity that characterized the youth movement made for a highly volatile organizational structure. The organization in Vyborg district was the main exception to this general trend. The Vyborg organization, the oldest and largest, remained active in the economic as well as in the political struggles of the district's young workers. In part, the SSRM's loss of membership might have been a consequence of the polarization that typified the youth movement and the working-class movement in general. In the summer of 1917, Nadezhda Krupskaya, who had close contact with the Vyborg youth movement, steadfastly opposed the creation of a new organizational center for the movement. She feared that a new center would undermine the mass character of the youth movement.<sup>28</sup> In fact, many

members who had identified themselves with the *Trud i svet* organization had been disillusioned in the wake of the movement's redefinition in August. Though a substantial part of the disaffected rejoined the youth movement after the initial blow, undoubtedly this served to push some members into the Red Guards or other organizations, or away from activism altogether.

Krupskaia argued that by defining itself as strictly pro-Bolshevik, the SSRM would alienate many of the movement's members. Her political experience led her to believe that, though in practice young workers supported the Bolshevik line, at the same time, they were not prepared to commit themselves as a whole to the Party. The working class supported the Bolsheviks because the Party's line reflected the sentiments of the radicalized sectors of that class.<sup>29</sup> Yet support for the Party line did not necessarily imply membership in the Party. The pro-Bolshevik identification of the youth organization satisfied the most radical sectors among young workers. But in order to represent those sectors, the SSRM sacrificed the mass character that its predecessor, *Trud i svet*, enjoyed. This remained a source of tension that manifested itself throughout the early years of the organized pro-Bolshevik youth movement.

Unemployment drove many Petrograders from the city, depriving popular organizations of their members; but it had other, more indirect, organizational repercussions. From its inception the youth movement, based at the factory level, had been fueled by the economic demands of young workers. As young workers lost their jobs, the organization no longer had a ready-made base at the factories. Those employed in the metal works, once the nucleus of the youth movement, were affected most adversely. By late 1917 and 1918 those economic demands that were so important to the movement were becoming less feasible. As the movement lost its ability to champion the six-hour day or free education effectively, it began to lose its popularity even with those young followers who were still living in the city. As the SSRM's membership dwindled, the movement lost credibility among adult workers, many of whom were hostile to the movement or, at best, ignored the legal and economic demands of young workers.<sup>30</sup>

## Youth and the Red Guards

The situation was exacerbated by the prolonged drain of the city's able-bodied population into the defense of the Revolution. Petrograd's youth bore a disproportionate share of the military burden. Youth's participation in the Red Guards began in the spring and summer of 1917 and intensified thereafter. With the need for military readiness that the Kornilov offensive evoked in August and that the seizure of power demanded in October, the institution of the Red Guards became one of the most attractive organizations for the most radical workers, especially young ones. In all likelihood, the majority of young radicals saw the Red Guards as their compelling responsibility after the Kornilov affair. They were not necessarily making a conscious choice between them and the youth committees, but, in effect, they shifted their energies away from the youth movement.

On 24 September the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik party called for the incorporation of the SSRM in the recruitment efforts of Red Guard detachments.<sup>31</sup> Earlier, the *Trud i svet* organization in Vyborg district had participated extensively in the recruitment of Red Guards.<sup>32</sup> Though Soviet sources fail to discuss the role of *Trud i svet* in the recruitment of Red Guards, the fact that Vyborg district had a larger number of Guards than any other district suggests that the youth organization played a significant role in recruitment drives.<sup>33</sup> Grigorii Driazgov recalled how virtually the entire Vyborg district youth organization joined the Guards. Paradoxically, as a whole, only 1.2 percent of the Red Guards claimed official affiliation with the SSRM.<sup>34</sup> Most youths joined the Guards at their own factories and obviously not through the SSRM.<sup>35</sup>

The Soviet historians A. N. Atsarkin and V. I. Startsev estimate that 40 percent of Petrograd's Red Guards were twenty-two years of age or younger.<sup>36</sup> However, detachments that actually fought at the front usually had younger members: almost half of those who fought at the Kaledin and Ukrainian fronts were twenty and under, 62 percent were twenty-two and under.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the proportion of youths increased in the months after the October insurrection. Startsev contends that the young flocked to the Red Guards especially to join the front detachments, probably because they promised action.<sup>38</sup>

On 24 October 1917 there were approximately 20,000 Red Guards in Petrograd. In the next two weeks, their numbers doubled.<sup>39</sup> For a time the Red Guards combined the functions of an army and



militia. In addition to stints at the front the Red Guards also fought banditry and looting at the district and factory level.<sup>40</sup> In March 1918 the merger of the Red Guards with the newly created Red Army resulted in the separation of the Guards' dual function. While part of the Guards joined the Petrograd militia, many joined the army. This was especially the case with the front battalions, where youth predominated. By 1 April 1918, 6,000 Petrograd factory workers had joined the Army. Many of these were youths.<sup>41</sup>

Driazgov saw the October Revolution and the period immediately after as the apex of SSRM activity precisely because of youth's role in the armed insurrection and the defense of the Revolution. Ironically, that very participation contributed to the movement's downfall because it deprived it of its best organizers.<sup>42</sup> Each mobilization crippled the organization for some time. For instance, on 22 February 1918 a citywide meeting of SSRM activists decided to reduce civilian work to a minimum and devote all of the organization's energies into the mobilization against the Germans. Unquestionably, the Revolution claimed some of the best activists for tasks other than those associated with the youth movement.

### The Crisis and the SSRM Leadership

The disruption of Petrograd's economic and social life, the mobilization into the Red Guards, and the precipitous loss of active members left their imprint on the SSRM's organizational life. As popular participation declined in the course of 1917 and 1918, workers' institutions began to function in centralized patterns. In turn, their leaders took on greater responsibilities both in decision-making and in the carrying out of policies.<sup>43</sup> Vasilii Alekseev decried this process within the SSRM in the first issue of the League's organ, *Iunyi proletarii*. According to Alekseev, the typical district committee began its life with a well-attended general meeting that would elect a board. All the elected officials would appear at the board's first meeting and assume specific tasks; but by the second meeting only some members would attend. In a brief period, two or three officials would do all the work of the district committee while the rest became inactive. As for the rank and file, only a tenth of the general membership would turn up at the meetings on a regular basis.<sup>44</sup> This pattern prevented the SSRM, a relatively new organization even by 1917 standards, from developing



any kind of local work.

The loss of members at the district level had its repercussions at the central level as well. The SSRM's Petrograd Committee had been decimated in the brief period since the first conference. During the October Revolution and thereafter, a triumvirate took charge of the committee's activities; Katsovich, Gerr, and Alekseev replaced the officers who had been elected at the First City Conference. At the beginning the city center had neither funds nor a meeting place. Eventually they settled at the headquarters of the Kolomenskii branch and obtained a hectograph with which to print proclamations and appeals.<sup>45</sup> In November the metal workers' trade union gave them funds to publish the first issue of the journal *Iunyi proletarii*.<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, the situation was desperate. To begin with, the Petrograd Committee received no membership dues because it lacked real links with the district branches. Only by chance did the central leadership learn anything about the local situation. The relationship between the youth movement's governing body and the district organizations had been weak since the creation of Trud i svet. But in the spring of 1917 the district committees had been relatively strong; the decimated district committees could not make up for the absence of leadership on the part of the municipal center the following fall and winter.<sup>47</sup>

Despite overwhelming problems, the Petrograd Committee convened the Second City Conference on 1 December and mobilized as many youth delegates as they had to the August [founding] Conference.<sup>48</sup> Driazgov observed a qualitative difference in the youth delegates present at the conferences. While the delegates to the first gathering had come strictly as factory delegates, those who came to the Second Conference were basically Red Guards stationed at individual factories but no longer involved in production. G. Driazgov and K. Surkov had learned of the Second Conference by chance.<sup>49</sup> Both were elected as members of the Second Petrograd Committee. The Second Conference concerned itself primarily with the shortage of activists, the massive loss of members, the economic situation of young workers, and the relationship between the SSRM and the Red Guards.<sup>50</sup>

After the conference, the Petrograd Committee received an office at the Commissariat of Enlightenment [Narkompros] and that department funded the December issue of the youth journal.<sup>51</sup> This marked the beginning of the close collaboration with government agencies, especially with Narkompros. That same month the

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Petrograd Committee sent V. Alekseev and G. Driazgov to the Commissariat of Labor. There, Alekseev helped formulate a plan for investigating the situation of minors in the factories and worked on the draft of the legislation on working minors enacted by Narkomtrud in 1918. In addition, the Petrograd Committee sent Leske to the Commissariat of Education, Alekseev to Proletkul't, and Driazgov and Viurkov to the Council on Literacy. For Driazgov, and for others, this administrative work meant severing ties with his factory and with Vyborg district. Subsequently, at the beginning of 1918, when his factory, New Parviainen, was evacuated to Iuzovka, Driazgov chose not to leave with it.<sup>52</sup>

Though its efforts to find a niche for the organization within the new state met with some success, the SSRM's overall situation only worsened. Within a month, the SSRM suffered its first internal crisis as those collectives that remained active became embroiled in the controversy that split the SSRM's central leadership. The process further undermined the local collectives and resulted in the strengthening of those sectors within the leadership that favored centralist solutions to the organization's problems.

On 14 January 1918 a group of SSRM activists created a "central initiating group" to help the Petrograd Committee carry out its work.<sup>53</sup> Among them were the founders of the commune on Dvorienskaia Street. Judging by Krupskaia's presence at this meeting and by Narkompros's sponsorship of the group's newspaper, *Listok iunogo proletariia*, this effort enjoyed the support of some Party leaders.<sup>54</sup> The initiating group was not intended to preempt the elected organs of the SSRM but to work under them in political and educational matters.<sup>55</sup> District initiating groups were also created to work in conjunction with the local SSRM branches and Narkompros to transform the existing youth clubs into a new type of school.<sup>56</sup> Sixteen activists made up the group, which was headed by Eduard Leske, the chairman of the SSRM's Petrograd Committee. The group's co-chair was Alexandra Anisimova and its secretary was Zinaida Bronshtein, Trotsky's oldest daughter.

The central initiating group soon took over many of the Petrograd Committee's functions. In Vyborg the district's initiating group replaced the SSRM district committee.<sup>57</sup> Overall, the coexistence of the elected and the 'initiating' organs seemed fraught with tensions. They shared the same personnel. But while the central initiating group purported to help the Petrograd Committee, it criticized its inability to stop the organization's dismemberment and

its failure to bridge the gap between the League and the masses of young workers. Through its organ, the *Listok*, the initiating group hoped to serve as a rallying point in its quest to prevent the membership's dispersal.

The idea of district-level initiating groups, which found support at least in Vyborg district, had been a feature of the youth movement in the spring of 1917.<sup>58</sup> Now it served as a model for a new organizational campaign. At a Petrograd Committee meeting on 19 January, Leske proposed disbanding the League's central organ because of its incapacity to carry on work and called for an extraordinary conference to discuss the situation. He proposed the creation of initiating groups in all districts and the re-registration of all League members. Leske favored establishing closer ties with the Bolshevik party and renaming the organization the Communist Youth League. To assure the new members' commitment to the organization, Leske suggested limiting membership to persons recommended by two League members and making admission to the League contingent on active participation in League work.<sup>59</sup>

At the meeting of 19 January, V. Alekseev called for a compromise that incorporated Leske's suggestions while maintaining the elected Petrograd Committee as the governing body and the League as a broad, mass organization rather than an auxiliary of the Bolshevik party.<sup>60</sup> Alekseev blamed the district committees for the dispersal and inertia, and by implication, shifted the criticism away from the Petrograd Committee.<sup>61</sup> How Alekseev created a "majority" of supporters of the Petrograd Committee remains unclear. Driazgov refers to this as an "enlarged" meeting.<sup>62</sup> This suggestion of "packing" conforms with other accounts of sparsely attended Petrograd Committee meetings.<sup>63</sup> In protest, a group made up primarily of Vyborg activists left the meeting, vowing to continue their activities at the local level. It formed the first opposition within the SSRM. Not surprisingly, the group included the dwellers of the Dvorienskaia Street commune.<sup>64</sup>

Because the members of the opposition had been identified with the youth movement since its beginnings, the group agitated successfully and actively at the local level.<sup>65</sup> The controversy spread throughout the SSRM, injecting a new life into the district organizations.<sup>66</sup> Meetings were fuller and the members read the youth newspaper with great excitement.<sup>67</sup> The majority escalated the conflict by attacking the opposition in the pages of *Iunyi proletarii* (after 27 January 1918 no longer called *Listok*). The

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Petrograd Committee resorted to the press because it lacked "the means and adequate ties with the districts to expand its activities" against their challengers.<sup>68</sup> For its part, the opposition organized a number of concerts and meetings, printed two proclamations denouncing the Petrograd Committee, and attended SSRM meetings where they debated the official line.

The opposition believed in the creation of autonomous groups that would carry out the League's reorganization from the grass roots up. For that reason, they were branded "anarcho-syndicalists," an epithet that has persisted in contemporary Soviet historiography. Harking back to the decentralized pattern of the previous spring, the opposition called for general meetings of all secretaries and district chairpersons to replace the useless Petrograd Committee.<sup>69</sup> Only through such "comradely solidarity and self-discipline" could the working class be guaranteed future "cadres of fighters." The opposition stressed the need for concrete action as opposed to the empty rhetoric and formalism of the SSRM's guiding organs. To the group, the SSRM had become a sham:

the entire energy of the SSRM is found in a score or so of its leaders, in a couple of hundred more or less conscious workers, before the full indifference of the rest. . . . And so, the organization's 16,000 members exist, as it were, in fiction.<sup>70</sup>

According to the rebels, this situation had arisen because the League had nothing to offer its rank and file as its leadership was more concerned with attaining political visibility for the organization than with carrying out concrete tasks. The opposition placed their hopes on a third city conference, which they hoped would disband the moribund League and create a new youth organization.

The third conference did not materialize because the Petrograd Committee refused to convoke it.<sup>71</sup> In all probability, it would have resulted in a political defeat for the Petrograd Committee. The Petrograd Committee had the upper hand in its struggle against the Leske-Driazgov opposition. In the second half of January the Petrograd Committee sponsored the opening of a number of new branches in Okhtinskii, Sestroretsk, and Moscow districts exclusively under its aegis.<sup>72</sup> The Petrograd Committee used cooptation rather than election to expand its membership and create a "loyal" majority. Leske charged the majority with the unfair use of parliamentary



procedure against the opposition's attempt to present its side to the rest of the Petrograd Committee.<sup>73</sup> After Leske walked out of the January 19 meeting, he was replaced as chairman of the Petrograd Committee without the benefit of elections. By far the most important organizational means used against the opposition was the press. The League's organ, *Iunyi proletarii*, aired the majority's views. Only Leske's one-column letter was published in response to the invective that filled the pages of the second through fifth issues of the newspaper.

V. Alekseev and L. Zaks led the attack against the opposition in the pages of *Iunyi proletarii*.<sup>74</sup> Although Alekseev recognized the League's critical situation, he attributed it to the lack of initiative on the part of many districts and, in the case of the active Vyborg district organization, to its failure to maintain close ties with the Petrograd Committee. By implication, then, the League's misfortunes came from the inadequacy of the base and the local leadership. Alekseev labeled Leske's proposed communes of disciplined activists sectarian and, in their "divorce from the masses," counter-revolutionary.<sup>75</sup> Zaks, who called his former comrades "stupid, lazy liquidators," tempered his attack by claiming that, nonetheless, the opposition did not constitute a "class enemy" and even expressed the possibility of reconciliation. This conciliatory tone suggested the actual strength of the opposition and its followers.

Without more precise information, it is difficult to determine the impact of the opposition's campaign on the rank and file. A metal worker himself, Leske was a popular, energetic activist; he and his supporters were well received at the district level. In Vyborg, they enjoyed the support of the secretary of the district Soviet, Vasilii N. Kaiurov, father of Aleksandr Kaiurov, an oppositionist. Through that connection, the opposition had access to the Red Hall (formerly Mikhailovskoe Military School) for their concerts and meetings.<sup>76</sup> At one point, Evgeniia Gerr tried to obtain Krupskaiia's support against the opposition. Krupskaiia told Gerr that this was an internal conflict that should be resolved solely by the young members of the SSRM.<sup>77</sup> That tolerance was short-lived. The opposition lost the elder Kaiurov's backing while Krupskaiia criticized it openly for its anarchism.<sup>78</sup> Whether or not the popular tide turned against the Leske group remains unclear. Leske suggests that their agitational campaign was going well at the time of the German attack against Pskov.<sup>79</sup> But the polemic gave way to unity before the impending



military threat posed by the Germans.

In the short run, the majority secured its position through organizational means not available to the opposition: the use of the League's press, the creation of new "loyal" district organizations, the selection of reliable officials to replace recalcitrant elected ones. Thereafter, none of the opposition leaders would hold important positions within the organized Communist youth movement. These aspects need not have become permanent features of the SSRM organizational apparatus. Yet, later, the same methods were applied in similar circumstances in the course of internal conflicts.

Just as important, the organization's locus of power had shifted away from the Vyborg and Narva districts to the First and Second City districts (later merged into the Central City district).<sup>80</sup> In the summer of 1917 the interdistrict youth organization had its center in Rozhdestvenskii, a sub-district of First City district. After the First City Conference in August 1917, the newly elected Petrograd Committee of the SSRM moved to Kolomenskii, a sub-district of Second City district. The move to Kolomenskii reflected a more generalized pattern since, after the October Revolution, the Kolomenskii district Soviet became in practice the leading Soviet for the rest of the city.<sup>81</sup>

In 1917 the interdistrict, Rozhdestvenskii, and Smolny youth organizations had been relatively small and non-proletarian. In a retrospective assessment of the Central district organization, V. Sorokin, himself a student activist, claimed that the membership in his district "never fell under 40 percent in its proletarian composition."<sup>82</sup> This figure should be compared to the almost purely working-class membership of the Vyborg and Narva organizations. The physical presence of the SSRM and, later, the Komsomol municipal center in the Second City district secured that district's predominance within the city's youth organization. With growing frequency, activists from that district would be assigned key tasks at the municipal level. This was especially important at conferences and mobilizations. Throughout the early history of the Bolshevik youth organization, the Central City district provided a disproportionate number of cadres to the Petrograd Committee, guberniia-level committee, and, later, to the Komsomol Central Committee.<sup>83</sup> The organizational links between the Petrograd center and the Central City district guaranteed the latter's privileged position in relation to former centers such as Vyborg. But just as important, the new structure afforded the Petrograd Committee

tighter control over these local organizations; in the spring and summer of 1918 they would become the leading districts as the SSRM restored its organizational apparatus.

The relationship between Vyborg and the Petrograd Committee had been contradictory. With the largest district membership, Vyborg represented a force to contend with: its contingent made up almost half of the second Petrograd Committee. Much as it had in the spring and summer of 1917, the Vyborg organization enjoyed considerable autonomy in relation to the center.<sup>84</sup> At the end of 1917 the Vyborg organization had obtained the support of the metal workers' trade union at the district level to declare the six-hour day for the district's young metal workers. But the district's factory committees, though they reduced working hours, refused to pay their young employees for an eight-hour day. The recalcitrant factory committees demanded that the Vyborg youth committee supply them with a written request confirmed by the League's Petrograd Committee. The Petrograd Committee refused to honor the district's request on the grounds that the Vyborg organization had acted independently.<sup>85</sup>

Clearly, this gesture of power on the part of the Petrograd Committee did not stem from differences over policy; the six-hour day remained one of the SSRM's basic demands. The Petrograd Committee withheld support because of the separate action of the district branch and its failure to give prior notice to the higher body. The opposition had wanted more autonomy for the local organizations. Leske had proposed the dissolution of the Petrograd Committee and its replacement with periodic conferences of district representatives. While the opposition had stood for decentralization and local initiative, the dominant sector, though not claiming this explicitly, favored giving the Petrograd Committee more authority and downplaying spontaneity and local initiative. It may be that the dominant sector's approach was more realistic, given the conditions created by a diminishing membership and general inactivity.

Leske had proposed tightening membership requirements because he believed that the influx of students into the League made it essential that the SSRM's growth be regulated. Given the fact that the local Party committees were creating sections of Communist students, the League would have to either accept the existence of a parallel, potentially rival organization of students or incorporate non-workers into its midst.<sup>86</sup> This reality worried Leske and the oppositionists, who feared that the organization's working-class

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cadres would be diluted. Purity of social background was linked in Leske's mind with political purity. Presumably, Leske's proposal to make admission contingent upon two recommendations from members would guarantee both the desired social origins and political commitment.<sup>87</sup>

The German invasion and the Civil War took their toll. The brutal conditions that characterized Russian political, social, and economic life between 1918 and the beginning of the New Economic Policy (NEP), were bound to affect the trajectory of the organized workers' movement in those years. The collapse and partial evacuation of industries, the mass military mobilizations that took their heaviest tolls among the urban working class, the food and fuel shortages ravaged the Socialist Youth League. The Petrograd Committee raised a small detachment of 109 men and 11 women to fight under Dybenko. Though the majority of youths once again fought with Red Guard detachments created in their factories or districts, the SSRM accepted that function that would dominate its existence during the Civil War: recruiter for the Red Guards, and later, for the Red Army.

## The SSRM in the Spring and Summer of 1918

In March, during a brief lull in the fighting, many of the Red Guard detachments returned to Petrograd. As the youth activists reached their districts they discovered, to their dismay, that the SSRM had collapsed. A few weeks later Evgeniia Gerr placed a notice in *Pravda* inviting all those interested in reviving the SSRM to attend a meeting at Narkompros. She signed herself secretary of the Petrograd Committee though no one had elected her to that position.<sup>88</sup>

In the last few months Evgeniia Gerr had taken an increasingly active part in the League's governing body. A relative latecomer to the movement, Gerr had moved to Petrograd from the provinces in May 1917. She became involved with the Bolshevik party soon thereafter. Ivan Skorinko, an SSRM activist from the Putilov works, recalled how Gerr became particularly talented in conducting street meetings and agitation in the summer of 1917.<sup>89</sup> Gerr joined the youth movement only in the fall that year. Soon thereafter she became part of the majority group, joining her friend Alekseev in the struggle against the Leske-led opposition. Her rise illustrated both the discontinuity that plagued the movement and its leadership and the fact that many of the

original activists, most of whom were males, were involved in the military effort or in Party or government-related work. Gerr had missed the period of greatest mass involvement in the youth movement. Now, at the movement's lowest point, she led the effort to revive it. But the revival could no longer take place at the factory level.<sup>90</sup>

Instead, an organizational bureau was created to call the Third City Conference of the SSRM. Originally the bureau included Leske, Gerr, and Ratnovskii, but Leske stopped attending meetings and was replaced by Orest Petropavlovskii. Apparently, tensions still remained from the earlier conflict.<sup>91</sup> On 10 April, after a few days of agitational work in the factories, where new collectives were created and delegates' elections were organized, the Third City Conference opened. Fewer than forty delegates, supposedly representing between 1,500 and 2,000 members, gathered at the conference. Though some veterans of the youth movement attended, the overwhelming majority consisted of newcomers to the movement.<sup>92</sup> The delegates acknowledged the organization's demise and the need to revive the district committees. Yet a proposal to change the charter and reorganize the League was defeated. Predictably, the conference did not result in a revival and, subsequently, almost nothing was done at the district level.<sup>93</sup>

Two weeks later, a small group of First City district activists discussed the feasibility of calling another city conference and of perpetuating the organization's existence.<sup>94</sup> Mikhail Glebov, formerly a member of the interdistrict organization, convinced the small group of activists that, in order to overcome the organization's crisis, the League should appoint full-time, paid district secretaries to found new local branches. The Bolshevik party played a crucial role in this effort. Local Party committees recalled youth activists from the front and from Party assignments to undertake the revival.<sup>95</sup>

As part of this renewed effort, the Fourth City Conference was called in the late spring of 1918.<sup>96</sup> Only twenty delegates met and the numbers of youth they represented remains unknown. The conference elected a new Petrograd Committee: M. Glebov, O. Ryvkin, I. Tiutikov, A. Slosman, and E. Tseitlin. (Leske and Alekseev were conspicuously absent from this new leadership.) A significant part of the former Petrograd Committee and SSRM activists had opposed the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, among them Alekseev, Katsovich, and Ratnovskii. None of these were re-elected to Petrograd Committee positions.<sup>97</sup> There were other indications of internal



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strife. Allegedly, Katsovich, who had replaced Leske as secretary, did not turn over membership lists, keys, and funds to the new secretary, Glebov.<sup>98</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1918 the Petrograd Committee, led by Glebov, established more regular links with the district committees. Narkompros gave the SSRM a small subsidy that allowed the organization to resume publication of its newspaper.<sup>99</sup> Glebov and his aide, A. Slosman, established a central apparatus and set out to re-create the district committees, choosing Narva-Peterhof for their initial effort. The Fourth Conference had mandated the re-registration of the few remaining members. Glebov and Slosman appointed the veteran, I. Tiutikov, as a full-time, paid district secretary whose task consisted of attracting experienced district youth activists, establishing a district headquarters, and issuing admission questionnaires and membership cards to new or re-registered members.

During the divisive controversy surrounding the SSRM's mass character, the group of activists headed by V. Alekseev insisted that the SSRM was a mass organization, an ideal more than a reality, given the loss of members. Leske and the opposition were more honest in their admission that the SSRM had ceased to be a mass organization. Years later, Lazar' Shatskin, though critical of the Leske opposition, attributed its rise to the SSRM's failure to find effective methods of approaching the rank and file.<sup>100</sup> In the spring of 1918 Glebov served as spokesman for a sector that sought new structures that would address the League's inability to expand its membership. But this sector favored bureaucratic and centralized means of solving that problem. While the vision shared by the members of the Leske opposition was tainted by elitism--a cadre of devoted revolutionaries would bring about a revival--they sought to create collectives that would have reorganized the district committees from the base up. As suggested earlier, this conformed with the initial organizational efforts of the youth movement in the spring of 1917. In contrast, Glebov's effort, with its paid, full-time functionaries and its concern with form (e.g., membership cards before there were members), constituted a departure from earlier organizational patterns.

The SSRM's difficulties stemmed from the absence of clear goals. The first organized efforts had responded to the economic and political needs of young workers in the relatively prosperous war-time economy. In 1917 young metal workers were in demand and could, therefore, press for higher pay, shorter hours, better



conditions, and educational benefits. Economic conditions made these demands impractical, especially from the point of view of an organization so closely identified with the state as was the SSRM. The last meeting of the rank and file on 15 January addressed the economic needs of young workers, specifically the six-hour day and the resistance of factory committees to the efforts of young workers. Subsequently the SSRM was unable to resolve these issues and to address the needs of the growing army of unemployed young workers.<sup>101</sup> To regain its status as spokesman for Petrograd's radical young workers, the SSRM needed to redefine its function and goals relative to the new conditions.

By the summer, as a result of another agitational campaign, the Petrograd organization regained some of its membership. The Petrograd Committee had been meeting on a regular basis and the organization had a representative, Glebov, on the Petrograd Soviet. Judging by the notices in *Petrogradskaia pravda* and *Krasnaia gazeta* the organization had local branches in the First City, Peterhof, Petrograd, Porokhovskii (Okhtinskii), and Vasilevskii Island districts.<sup>102</sup> As soon as the organization had partially recovered, the leadership shifted its attention to the preparations for the national congress scheduled for that fall.

As part of the pre-congressional preparations, the Petrograd Committee sponsored the Fifth City Conference on 29 September and the First Northern Regional Congress on 20 October. Only twenty-five delegates from five city districts attended the Fifth City Conference. Judging by the local reports, the membership at the city level had dropped to under 700.<sup>103</sup> Probably these figures concealed an even more appalling situation. Tolmazov reported that, since the previous city conference, Vyborg had continued to lose its rank and file to the Red Guards and to the countryside. In September the Vyborg organization opened the Lunacharskii club at the district's League headquarters. However, relations between Vyborg and the center remained strained even then. There was a debate as to whether the Vyborg branch should call itself the SSRM or the Communist Youth League. Indicative of the need for a body to protect the economic rights of young workers, Vyborg's work revolved around the implementation of the six-hour day and gaining recognition from the factory committees--the same causes it had championed since the spring of 1917. Tolmazov underscored their lack of success even in their modest endeavors.<sup>104</sup>

From the reports, it became clear that, besides Vyborg, only the

First City and Vasilevskii Island district committees had been successful in carrying out activities. Because the membership in the First City district consisted primarily of students and *intelligenty*, its work centered around cultural and artistic activity and political agitation. With the help of a full-time paid secretary, the Vasilevskii Island branch expanded its membership from fewer than 30 to about 800 members by the time of the national congress a month later. But Sobolev expressed his concern that, in Vasilevskii Island, young workers voiced open hostility toward the SSRM. With the exception of Vyborg, the district organizations seemed to be doing no economic work.<sup>105</sup>

Less than a month later Oskar Ryvkin reported to the delegates at the First Northern Regional Congress that the SSRM's membership had grown to 1,500.<sup>106</sup> The membership figures for the entire region reflect the vicissitudes that the organization and the working class as a whole experienced since the beginning of the year. Yet even the figure of 1,500 is deceptive. The reports from the local organizations outside Petrograd show that close to 45 percent of the members represented at the First Regional Congress had been recruited less than seven weeks before the gathering. In other words, these regional collectives, like the municipal ones, did not reflect continuous, stable work, but rather the efforts of agitational drives for the purpose of sending delegates to the regional and national congresses.

Newcomers predominated in the membership of the SSRM's municipal and regional collectives. The leadership was also new. The Vyborg activist Nikolai Fokin and the controversial Eduard Leske attended, but they, as well as Alekseev, Gerr, and Driazgov, were conspicuously absent from the new leadership. With the exception of Ryvkin and Petropavlovskii, new faces dominated the Petrograd Committee which also included Slosman, Ugarov, Aleksandrov, Poliachikhin, and Chekalova. At the provincial level, the Petrograd Committee had sent city activists to organize new collectives and to represent them at the regional congress. For example, Tseitlina organized and represented the outlying Velikie Luki, while V. Sokolov did the same for Bol'shaia Vishera. Significantly, these were two of the largest organizations represented at the regional congress. The appointment of full-time organizers, which had begun in the city in the spring of 1918, characterized the organization of provincial areas as well.

Both the Fifth City Conference and the First Northern Regional Congress spelled out the tasks for the national congress: to draft a

unified program and charter and define the relationship of the youth organization to the Communist party. About 80 percent of the delegates to the regional congress were Party members and the majority of the rest were sympathizers. In practice, though not in theory, the organization was becoming a league of young Communists. By contrast, less than a year earlier, a heated debate had ensued over the political line of the journal *lunyi proletarii*. Reflecting the broad political spectrum represented in the SSRM at that time, the first issue of the journal had no party slogan since there had been no consensus on that matter. In the winter of 1917-1918 the SSRM rejected Leske's proposal for reactivating the district organizations ostensibly because he called for closer identification with the Party. In reality, the attack on Leske and his supporters had more to do with Leske's demand for greater autonomy and a weaker municipal center than with Party affiliation. Those who retained power within the SSRM resorted to such bureaucratic measures as salaried district secretaries rather than depend on the grass roots activism that had characterized the early stages of the youth movement. Those sectors preferred a smaller, politically reliable organization to the mass efforts of earlier days. Ryvkin expressed this sentiment when he pointed out that, though the organization had become numerically weaker, its political line had become far clearer and stronger. The stage had been set in the course of 1918 for a more select organization that would maintain closer ties with the Party.

Members of the Petrograd Committee wished to express the political change by changing the League's name from Socialist League of Young Workers to Communist Youth League. At the coming congress, they planned to propose that name for the national organization as well. Even in 1918 the decision to change the name of the SSRM to the more party-defined Communist Youth League did not enjoy universal support. Specifically, the Vyborg activist Tolmazov and Evgennia Gerr opposed this closer identification at the Fifth City Conference on the grounds that it would alienate many young workers.<sup>107</sup> Tolmazov's rejection of a more defined name might have stemmed from his perception of the political mood of the district's young workers. Also, a significant part of the leadership might have felt a sense of loyalty to the old name because it reflected a broad organization of young Socialists. But this broader vision was not shared by such activists as Oskar Ryvkin. Already Mikhail Glebov had proposed the new name to the organizational bureau that prepared the convocation of the first national congress.

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The character of the SSRM had changed since its origins in the spring of 1917. It was less a spontaneous, mass organization of young workers than an organization of the politically committed. The social composition of the delegates to the First Northern Regional Conference reflected another aspect of the SSRM's transformation: fewer than 40 percent of all delegates were factory workers while 43 percent were neither industrial workers nor peasants, and presumably were students and white-collar workers. These were no longer the young fifteen-year-old factory activists from Vyborg district, but older, more mature young adults who attended the regional gathering. In fact, the majority of the delegates were ages eighteen to twenty-two; a third were over twenty-one. These delegates seemed more concerned with form and clarity of purpose than their forerunners had been. In fact, the organization had ceased to be a broad coalition of groups sharing their solidarity with the Bolshevik party. The Civil War had changed the country's political life; the new situation called for commitment rather than general solidarity.

In 1917 young workers had flocked to the organization *Trud i svet* in search of economic protection, cultural and educational activities, and a forum in which they could express their support for the Revolution. When the SSRM supplanted *Trud i svet*, it offered its members a more defined political and economic program that seemed to suit at least part of the membership. In the year after its founding, the youth leadership discovered that the SSRM could neither meet the demands that it had championed the preceding spring and summer nor hold on to its membership.

That the SSRM survived at all is a tribute to the small groups of devotees who, during the worst times in 1918, saw to it that the League recovered, even if only partially. They were probably inspired by the movement's history. A few months before, the youth movement had been able to mobilize its members for demonstrations in favor of representation in political institutions and in factory committees or in support of broader political aims (for example, during the July Days).

It is difficult to reconstruct the motivation and disposition of the SSRM's leaders and rank and file members during that difficult year. What motivated them to join the SSRM? Given the economic and organizational realities of that year, it would seem that (since the SSRM could no longer offer that same economic, educational, and cultural program that it adopted in the summer of 1917) increasingly,



its members were drawn primarily to the organization's political identity.

### **The Moscow and Petrograd Organizations before the First Congress**

In July the Petrograd Committee leadership learned of the intention of the Moscow youth organization to call a national congress. The Petrograders wanted to secure a key role in the congress and sent Glebov to Moscow to participate in the preparations. Glebov's advocacy of the new name, the Communist Youth League (Komsomol), shocked the Muscovites within the organizational bureau. In contrast to the Moscow youth organization, the SSRM had always displayed a broader political character.<sup>108</sup> Moscow's youth organizations had emerged in May and June of 1917.<sup>109</sup> Among the most important was the organization under the auspices of the Party's Moscow Committee. That organization, whose membership was composed primarily of *gimnaziia* students,<sup>110</sup> did not carry out economic work and had no direct contact with young factory workers.<sup>111</sup> However, some of its members established a branch of the youth organization in the working-class Khamovniki district.<sup>112</sup> By July the total membership of these organizations remained relatively small: about 260 persons.<sup>113</sup>

The organizations in the Red Presnia and Zamoskvorechie districts differed from the first two organizations in social composition, and to some extent, in their relationship to the Bolshevik party. Both had evolved from the efforts of young Bolsheviks or Bolshevik sympathizers; but technically they were not Party auxiliaries. However, the ties were much closer even between these leagues and the Party than between the SSRM and the Party. For example, admission to the Presnia organization implied admission into the Party.<sup>114</sup> The Presnia organization, though it had the Tilmans factory as its base, had a relatively small membership of about two hundred.<sup>115</sup>

Only the Zamoskvorechie league, called the Third International, developed a mass following similar to the Petrograd district organizations.<sup>116</sup> With its base at Einem, Mikhelson, and Tsindel factories, this district organization had approximately 1,000 members in the fall of 1917.<sup>117</sup> Though led by young Bolsheviks, the Zamoskvorechie league seemed to be the sole spontaneous effort of

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any importance in the Moscow pro-Bolshevik youth movement.<sup>118</sup> Another working-class organization was created in the Butyrki district, but this was a later development, taking place in September 1918. This latter effort also responded to the initiative of a small group of young Bolsheviks.<sup>119</sup>

After the Sixth Party Congress the Moscow Committee's Youth League disbanded and was replaced by the Moscow Organizational Committee (MOK). In September, under MOK's initiative, the various Bolshevik youth organizations formed a coalition under the name of the Third Youth International.<sup>120</sup> On 8 October 1917 this coalition sponsored the first Moscow City Youth Conference. Accounts vary, but by the time of the conference, the new organization had between 2,200 and 5,000 members.<sup>121</sup>

Compared to Petrograd's SSRM, by the fall of 1917 the Third International Youth League had a more modest membership, closer organizational ties with the Bolshevik party, and little experience with factory committees and other forms of economic struggle. The Moscow movement had displayed centralizing tendencies earlier than its counterpart in Petrograd. However, the differences between the two city organizations had begun to fade by the time they pooled their resources to call the first national congress in the fall of 1918. The membership of both had been ravaged by that time.<sup>122</sup> Despite the dispersal of their membership, both organizations had managed to concentrate power in their respective municipal central organs, and both identified themselves as Communist organizations. With the dispersal of so many of its factory collectives and the influx of students in 1918, the Petrograd organization was beginning to resemble Moscow's in class composition. In both, the number of students and white-collar workers grew at a faster rate than the number of young workers. Most important, both organizations showed a remarkable capacity for establishing branches from the top down.

On the eve of the congress, the Muscovites felt distrust toward the "Pitertsy" [Petrograders].<sup>123</sup> Though Tsetlin ascribed this to the Pitertsy's aggressiveness over the name change, the tension most likely stemmed from their rivalry for power at the national level.

## **The First National Congress of the Communist Youth League [Komsomol]**

The founding congress of the Komsomol met in Moscow from 29 October to 4 November 1918. The majority of the 194 delegates

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present at the congress came from industrial urban centers such as Moscow, the Central Industrial Region, Petrograd, and the Urals. Moscow became the undisputed center for the national Communist youth organization, a reflection of the political ascendancy of Moscow after the German invasion and subsequent evacuation of Petrograd. This ascendancy was manifest in the Central Committee elected by the congress. Of the fifteen full members, nine came from Moscow city or region; three came from Petrograd. The congress elected a Muscovite, Efim Tsetlin, as chairman.

Oskar Ryvkin opened the sessions on the local reports with an account of the Petrograd organization's glorious revolutionary past. Ryvkin emphasized the "petty-bourgeois" leadership of *Trud i svet*, but he pointed out that the youth movement had a clear working-class character from the start. This latter factor allowed the movement to assume a more politically defined position under *Trud i svet*'s successor, the SSRM. Though Ryvkin failed to mention the SSRM's broad political character, he took pride in its mass, working-class membership. Ryvkin boasted of the organization's activities at the factory level and its championing the economic rights of young workers. On a less triumphant note, he surveyed the toll taken on the organization by the German invasion and the outbreak of the Civil War. Thus, he focused on external factors and ignored the internal vicissitudes of the SSRM. On a positive note, Ryvkin concluded with the SSRM's renewed work and its continuing struggle for such working-class causes as the enforcement of the decrees on labor protection and improved housing for young workers.<sup>124</sup> Ryvkin's reaffirmation of the SSRM's working-class origins seemed aimed at the Moscow organization's more intellectual roots.

Somewhat defensively, Lazar' Shatskin agreed that his organization had begun as a narrow league of Bolshevik sympathizers working under the Party's Moscow Committee. But, Shatskin assured the gathering, by the fall of 1917 "broad circles of young workers" had joined Moscow's Third International. However, Shatskin's description of Third International activities underscored the organization's weak base in the factories, a striking contrast to *Trud i svet* and the SSRM. The Petrograd organization came to embody the revolutionary, working-class tradition for the delegates at the First Congress. While Moscow could pride itself for its role in convening the congress, Petrograd still exercised considerable influence nationwide. As Shatskin admitted, Moscow and, by implication, other regional organizations lagged behind the former capital, especially in their

literary and ideological activities. *Iunyi proletarii* outshone all other youth publications, including Moscow's *Tretii internatsional molodezhi*.<sup>125</sup>

By the beginning of the congress, the Petrograd and Moscow leadership reached a compromise on the political line of the gathering. The Petrograd delegation had the honor of proposing the League's name. Although Tsetlin, the congress's central figure, delivered most major reports and presided over many key debates, Ryvkin shared the limelight with him and Shatskin.<sup>126</sup> Ryvkin gave the report on the League's charter and the key political speech, which included a defense of the Bolshevik dismissal of the Constituent Assembly and curtailment of freedom of the press.

The congress witnessed three major interrelated controversies around the League's political identity as expressed by its name, the degree of initiative and autonomy accorded to the local and regional organizations, and the League's mass character. The discussions around these thorny issues revealed major divisions among the delegates. The Moscow representatives consistently defended the positions presented by the presidium members. In general, the Petrograd delegation concurred with the key speakers and the Muscovites. But there was one significant exception to this pattern: the Petrograd delegation defended regional autonomy against encroachment from the center.

The most controversial part of the discussion on the program centered on the adoption of the name "Communist Youth League." The protocols record the contributions of only thirteen discussants (of twenty-six who signed up).<sup>127</sup> Of the two opponents to the name, Tolmazov was a member of the Petrograd delegation. Evgeniia Gerr, who had sided with Tolmazov on this issue at the Fifth City Conference, now repudiated that position on the grounds that it contradicted the official stand of the Petrograd organization. Gerr added that this represented merely Tolmazov's personal view, a reflection of his lack of party affiliation. Though the record of this controversy remains incomplete, important sectors, primarily among the provincial delegates, feared that closer identification with the Bolshevik party would result in a mass exodus, especially in rural organizations.<sup>128</sup> Since in reality there were few peasant organizations, those delegates most likely feared that their organizations would never develop a mass following if they were seen as Communist bodies.

Essentially, this was not a debate over political affiliation: the



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majority of the delegates were either Party members or sympathizers (88 and 33, respectively, i.e., 72 percent of all delegates). Earlier, the delegates voted to declare the League's solidarity with the Bolshevik party with only two abstentions and no opposing votes. Underlying the debate on the name was the League's mass character. Would the League reach out to all young workers and peasants or would it unite only those committed or sympathetic to the Party? Tolmazov and Petkevich, the other opponent to the name, believed that by identifying itself so closely with the Party, the organization would trade away its potential mass character.<sup>129</sup> Both cautioned that rather than define itself openly as a Communist organization, the League should build up its reputation and credibility among youth on the basis of its activities. In Tolmazov's opinion, irrespective of the name, the Petrograd organization had accomplished remarkably little in the course of a year.<sup>130</sup>

All but two of the eleven speakers who supported the name change came from Petrograd, Moscow, or the Moscow region. It is not surprising, therefore, that none of the speakers addressed the dominant fear of the provincial delegates directly: the name change would alienate young peasants. All paid homage to the unity of young workers and peasants. Yet while they expressed confidence in the League's ability to dispel popular resistance to the Revolution through political education, none of the speakers offered practical steps to secure the initial trust of the young masses. In fact, gaining the support of the masses per se was not the majority's priority. Concurring with Ryvkin's remarks to the First Northern Regional Conference, Shatskin declared:

To begin with, we must not sacrifice the quality of the organization or the sake of numbers. Second, if on the side of youth there appears to be a lack of understanding, a fear of our name, we must break the wall of incomprehension, and not sacrifice the name, which is the only one possible for our League if it wants to be a political organization and express its political essence.<sup>131</sup>

Shatskin voiced the paradoxical opinion of the majority of the youth leadership. According to the first three goals in its program, the League aimed to disseminate Communist ideals among young workers and peasants, to transform them into class-conscious

fighters for the new state, and to integrate them into the active construction of Soviet Russia (see Appendix 4 for the Program). In many of the regions represented at the congress, especially in rural areas, the political reality of 1918 precluded a mass following for organizations that declared themselves Communist.

The second major controversy addressed the problem of educating those sectors who were neither committed Bolsheviks nor sympathizers. The Urals delegation proposed the creation of a network of "Homes for Young Workers" to complement the system of compulsory education. These homes would serve as educational and agitational centers where young people who were not willing to join the League could spend all their free time. A seemingly innocent plan, and one that might have proven infeasible from a financial point of view, the proposal met with fierce resistance from the presidium.<sup>132</sup> The homes' main defenders, Khazan and Iurovskaia, made an impassioned plea to the delegates to at least allow the experiment to continue in those areas where it had proven successful, but the majority defeated the amendment.<sup>133</sup> The protocols do not include the breakdown of this particular vote, but voting was delayed by a fierce debate. Another show of support for the homes and their proponents came with the vote for the Central Committee members: Khazan received an impressive 100 votes, second only to Efim Tseitlin.

The debate on the homes revolved around the issue of cultural and educational work as a means of broadening the League's appeal. The detractors' arguments were weak. Shatskin rejected the homes because, since they were really clubs, it made no sense to impose the name, "Homes of Young Workers," on all clubs throughout Russia. Tseitlin opposed it because the proposal involved working with adults, thereby weakening the League's organizational autonomy.<sup>134</sup> The last reason seemed particularly weak, given the League's close work with adults in Narkompros, Proletkul't, and the Party. It is interesting that the Petrograd delegation hardly participated in the debate. Gerr defended the delegates' right to continue the discussion when the Muscovite Popov moved to end the debate.

A few months earlier the Petrograders had fought against Leske's plan to foment recruitment and agitational work through the creation of initiating groups that would reach out to the masses of young workers. The Urals homes would have been run by a smaller group of Komsomol activists, working primarily as autonomous local bodies. This aspect of the proposal recalled Petrograd's earlier crisis, and in this respect it might have been attacked by the

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Petrograders. Yet the proposal was also tied to the rights of regional organizations to work out their own tactics.<sup>135</sup> The implications for local and regional autonomy in relation to the center could not have gone unnoticed by the Petrograd activists.

In fact, in the third controversy the Petrograd delegation cast its vote on the side of the regional cause. Tsetlin and Shatskin proposed that the lists of candidates for election to the Central Committee be drawn up at the Congress, on the grounds that this would make the candidates responsible to the Congress that elected them. They argued that not all regions had competent workers who could perform well at the national level. The defenders of regional election of Central Committee members countered that the regional committees knew their own members' merits best because they had been elected precisely on the bases of their work. Moreover, by electing their members within the Central Committee, the regions would have more control over their activities since the members would be subject to recall. In effect, regional election of Central Committee members would have given the regional committees considerable power within the central organization.<sup>136</sup> The central body would have been closer to a federation of autonomous entities rather than to a bureaucratic center of an undifferentiated whole. Those members who favored greater centralization carried the vote in favor of congressional election of Central Committee members.<sup>137</sup>

Despite its stand on the regional issue, the Petrograd delegation did not initiate any major debate. The relative silence of the Pitertsy seemed particularly striking in the area of economic rights. The Pitertsy could have joined the delegations that represented largely working-class organizations--Voronezh, Nizhny Novgorod, and Vitebsk--when they exposed such obstacles to their work as resistance from factory committees and from adult workers in general. But the Pitertsy did not pick up the issue, let alone lead a discussion on the matter. Economic questions were not discussed on the floor and the program relegated this area to a fourth place in the list of Komsomol priorities.

In their failure to bring up the particular complaints of young workers, the Petrograd delegates had conformed with the largely conciliatory spirit of the congress that emphasized working class unity over possible tensions within the class. In this respect, the delegates voiced the sense of vulnerability before external and internal enemies prevalent since the outbreak of the Civil War. The Congress declared youth to be the "most revolutionary element within

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the working class," the vanguard of the Revolution. Yet it did not concede that youth might constitute a particular sector with its own special interests that not always coincided with the interests of adult workers. This stress on unity extended itself to the peasants as well. Repeatedly, the leadership asserted the need to elaborate a program of action for the rural areas while downplaying the differences separating young workers and peasants.

The striving for unity responded to the real threats that the Revolution faced. But in their efforts to create a solid front, the founders of the national organization constructed a base fraught with tensions and contradictions. Perhaps the most basic tension stemmed from the League's avowed commitment to "propagandize Communist ideals widely among young workers and peasants" while in practice the organization was dedicated to the unity of the converted. The first implied mass recruitment, the second, the exclusive participation of young Bolsheviks and sympathizers.

Another source of tension was expressed in the goal of "developing initiative of action in youth." The highly centralized internal structure that the congress approved in its organizational charter would hinder initiative of action. Initiative would also be limited by such external constraints as the organization's relation to the Party and to other institutions such as the Soviet, Narkompros, and the trade unions. Already in the course of the congress, the delegates witnessed the curtailment of some of their initiative. During the discussion on the charter, the delegates voted to empower members of the Central Committee to participate with a full vote in the sessions of the Soviet Executive Committee. In the evening session that day, Shatskin informed the delegates that the secretary of the Executive Committee had denied the League the right to representation even with only a consultative vote because it violated the Soviet's constitution.

From the perspective of the Petrograd activists, the congress had achieved much. To begin with, it worked out a program for all regional organizations. More important, the Congress declared the pro-Bolshevik youth movement to be a concrete political entity at the national level. In so doing, it gave a new lease to the weakened Petrograd organization by recognizing its viability and giving the city league much needed prestige and credibility. Yet it left many concrete problems unresolved. Such issues as the methods to be used in recruiting new members, the goals of those recruitment drives, and the extent of its commitment to the protection of working minors



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would present dilemmas for the Petrograd organization's future development.

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The youth organization, like many other working-class institutions, was a recent phenomenon. By the time the First National Congress met, the youth organization was only a year old. Yet a major transformation had taken place in that year. From a loose organization of young radicals who sympathized with the Bolshevik cause in 1917 it had become a more select group of young Communists and sympathizers. This transformation found expression in decisions taken at the First Congress.

Both the Petrograd and the national organizations had to contend with the spontaneity that had characterized much of the activities of the member youth leagues. At the beginning of 1918 the Petrograd organization rejected the proposal put forth by Leske for creating smaller groups of committed League activists who would dedicate themselves to agitational work among young factory workers. The proposed "Homes for Young Workers" championed by the Urals delegation at the First Congress represented a similar attempt to solve the problem of recruiting the masses of young workers and peasants. Both reflected a perception of the dichotomy between activists and "the masses" and both sought the means to "massify" the organization. But "massification" per se was neither the top priority for the Petrograd organization nor that of the majority at the First Congress. At a time of even greater polarization than in 1917, both the local and national organizations saw their concrete support of the new state as more pressing than the organization's potential mass character.

The 1918 decree banning child labor, night work, and overtime for minors also guaranteed the six-hour day for young workers under eighteen years of age.<sup>139</sup> This satisfied some of the basic demands of the working-class youth movement. Unlike the SSRM, the Komsomol aimed to act less as a pressure group promoting legal changes than as an enforcer of government decrees. This function had not come about overnight. Economic demands had been central to the SSRM from the time of the First Conference in August 1917 and even earlier. Indeed, the SSRM had defined itself in opposition to Trud i svet's failure to develop its own clear economic program. To a degree, the relationship between the struggle for the economic rights of young workers and the imperative to develop their political or class consciousness stood in

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tension to each other. Judging by the SSRM program, we can conclude that at least part of the leadership gave top priority to political education rather than to economic rights. This suggests a basic difference from the rank and file, for whom problems with the factory committees and administrators and with unemployment remained of utmost importance in 1917 and 1918.

The last mass meetings held by the SSRM in December 1917 and January 1918 paid almost exclusive attention to economic issues, an indication of the role that the struggle for economic rights played within the city's youth movement. Again, the leadership sensed this tension. V. Alekseev admitted that, while the SSRM was not primarily an economic organization, it had to concern itself with the economic interests of Petrograd's young workers. To succeed as an institution representing young workers, it had to take an active part in their economic struggle. Yet after the internal crisis of 1918, the SSRM's economic activities vanished. This was a response to such objective factors as the economic collapse, the exodus of workers from the rank and file, and the military emergency the northern provinces faced in the first half of 1918. But it also reflected the views of the dominant sectors within the leadership, sectors that increasingly asserted the primacy of the League's political and educational tasks. The First Congress consolidated this process by relegating economic tasks to a fourth position in its list of priorities.

The Petrograd organization would have to contend with the economic demands of young workers as it set out to reactivate its factory collectives. It would discover in 1919 and 1920 that neither the national Congress nor the Petrograd Committee had worked out a practical economic program. The League would discover, as well, that its primary function during the Civil War, the recruitment of young Red Army soldiers, had a double edge. While the League's participation in the mobilizations guaranteed it a crucial function within the new state, it also deprived the organization of a stable rank and file and leadership until the beginning of NEP.

## NOTES

1. The group included Shura Anisimova, Mil'da Ivan, Konstatin Surkov, Aleksandr Kaiurov, Grigorii Driazgov, and Eduard Leske. See G. Driazgov, "'Anarkhistskaia' kommuna," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, ed. P. F. Kudelli (Leningrad, 1926), 81.
2. *Iunyi proletarii* [hereafter, *IUP*,] 11 November 1917: 4.
3. *Ibid.*, 13.
4. *Ibid.*, 7-8.
5. *Krasnaia letopis'*, 9 (1923): 168.
6. Driazgov, "Po proidennomu puti," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 57.
7. Aleksandr Kaiurov, "Tovarishchi," *IUP*, 1917, no. II: 11.
8. Aleksandr N. Atsarkin, *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia i molodezh': rozhdenie Komsomola* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1981), 138.
9. The sources are silent on the outcome of this particular conflict.
10. *Listok iunogo proletarii*, 21 January 1918, no. 1: 4.
11. A. Afanas'ev, "Na Putilovskoi verfi," *IUP*, 16 December 1917, no. II: 15.
12. *IUP*, 16 December 1917, no. II: 15.
13. Udalov, "Politiko-vospitatel'naia rabota za 5 let," in *Za 5 let*, ed. M. Udalov and O. Ryvkin (Petrograd, 1922), p. 14.
14. Vsesoiuznyi Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodezhi, *Protokoly I S"ezda RKSM (29/X-4 XI/1918)* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 8.
15. S. N. Valk, ed., *Oktiabr'skoe vooruzhennoe vosstanie: 1917 god v Petrograde* (Leningrad, 1967), v. II, 509.
16. By the beginning of 1918 only 48 percent of all locomotives were operating. See William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1935), vol. II, 418. In December Petrograd was cut off from its fuel suppliers in Baku and Ekaterinodar. See Z. V. Stepanov, *Rabochie Leningrada v period podgotovki i provedeniia oktiabr'skogo vooruzhennogo vosstaniia*, (Leningrad: Nauka, 1965), 163; Valk, *Oktiabr'skoe*, 506-9, 512-13.
17. O. I. Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia v sotsial'nom sostave fabrichno-zavodskikh rabochikh Leningrada (1917-28)," *Istoriia SSSR*, V (1959): 24; S. G. Strumilin, "Prozhitochnyi minimum i zarabotki chernorabochikh v Petrograde, 1914-1918 gg," *Problemy ekonomiki truda* (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), vol. III, 385. Chamberlin puts the figure of employed at 20 to 30 percent of the 1917 level. See *Russian Revolution*, vol. II: 419. See also, A. L. Fraiman, *Revoliutsionnaia zashchita Petrograda v 1918 g.* (Moscow, 1964), 21.
18. Valk, *Oktiabr'skoe*, 515. The figure used in these comparisons applies to the work force as of 1 January 1917.
19. Strumilin, "Prozhitochnyi minimum," 385; M. Solodnikova, "Rabochii v svete statistiki," *Arkhiv istorii truda*, IX (1923): 34; Stepanov, *Rabochie Leningrada*, 185. Soviet historians have downplayed (in my opinion, unconvincingly) the effect that the economic crisis had on cadre workers. For example, see Valk, *Oktiabr'skoe*, 513; Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia v sotsial'nom sostave," 25.
20. Valk, *Oktiabr'skoe*, 513. The youth category includes only adolescents (podrostki).
21. In January 1917 Petrograd's population had been between 2.5 and 2.7 million. By June 1918 it had been reduced to 1.5 million. See Strumilin, "Prozhitochnyi minimum,"

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- 357; Valk, *Oktiabr'skoe*, 522; Stepanov, *Rabochie Leningrada*, 162.
22. Stepanov, *Rabochie Leningrada*, 380.
23. Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. I, 417-18.
24. Strumillin, "Prozhitochnyi minimum," 340-47.
25. *Ibid.*, 380. The average unskilled worker earned about 11 rubles 20 kopeks a day. It cost over 23 rubles to purchase 3,500 calories per day.
26. Diane Koenker, *Moscow Workers and the 1917 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 180-82.
27. David Mark Mandel, "The Development of Revolutionary Consciousness among the Industrial Workers of Petrograd between February and November 1917" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1978), 431-32.
28. "Vtoraia Leningradskaia obshchegorodskaia partkonferentsiia," *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1926), 9-11, 15-17.
29. See Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: the Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1976), 310-14.
30. *Novaia zhizn'*, 3 November 1917, 4.
31. Iu. S. Afanas'ev, E. Ia. Remizova, and Z. M. Ivanova, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii VLKSM* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1969), 42-43.
32. See the instruction of 17 August 1917 signed by Krupskaiia authorizing members of the Vyborg Trud i svet committee to raise recruits from the factories Nes Lessner, Struk, Ekval, and Puzyrev.
33. Startsev estimates that in November Vyborg had over 31 percent of the city's Red Guards though the figure decreased to 20 percent in January and February of 1918. See V. I. Startsev, *Ocherki po istorii Petrogradskoi Krasnoi Gvardii i rabochei militsii* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1965), 235, 254.
34. Startsev, *Ocherki*, 261.
35. Fraiman, *Revoliutsionnaia zashchita*, 124. Driazgov estimates that 75 percent of the SSRM membership went to the front. See "Na pomoshch' golodnomu Piteru," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 87.
36. Startsev, *Ocherki*, 267.
37. *Ibid.*, 280.
38. *Ibid.*, 282-83.
39. *Ibid.*, 198-200.
40. For example, Driazgov worked in a special Red Guard detachment dedicated to the struggle against banditry together with the youth activists Konstantin Surkov and Vasilii Sokolov.
41. O. I. Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia v sotsial'nom sostave," 24.
42. Driazgov, *Zapiski Komsomol'tsa* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1930), 158-59.
43. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 141-42.
44. Mikhail Glebov, "O tret'em i chetvertom Petrogradskikh Komitetakh SSRM," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 121; Stephen Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories, 1917-1918* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 202.
45. *IUP*, December 1917, no. I: 10-11.
46. Kolomenskii was a subdistrict of Second City District. Leske, "Kak my organizovali soiuz sotsialisticheskoi rabochei molodezhi," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 78.
47. *Novaia zhizn'*, 3 November 1917, 4; Atsarkin, *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*, 60.
48. Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia kommuna molodezhi," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 78.
49. *Iunyi proletarii* estimated the number of members at the time of the Second City



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Conference to have been close to 16,000. Of course, these numbers might have been "paper" figures, not active members. According to this estimate, Vyborg still had close to 3,000 members and Kolomenskii almost 2,000. See *IUP*, 1918, no. 1: 2.

50. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 157; "Anarkhistskaia," 79.

51. Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, IX-X (1926): 1.

52. Leske, "Kak my organizovali," 112-13.

53. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 158; Driazgov and Shidlovskii, *Odin iz osnovateliei Komsomola: Vasia Alekseev* (Leningrad, 1926), 85.

54. Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," 105; *Listok iunogo proletarii*, 1918, no. 1: 3.

55. Udalov, "Politiko-vospitateľnaia rabota," 14.

56. *Listok*, 1918, no. 1: 1; Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," 106.

57. *Listok*, 1918, no. 1: 3; M. Udalov, "Politiko-vospitateľnaia rabota za 5 let," *Za 5 let (1917-1922): Istoricheskii sbornik*, ed. M. Udalov and O. Skar [Ryvkin] (Petrograd, 1922), 14. Driazgov stated that the initiating groups were supposed to oversee the replacement of "saboteurs and intelligenty" from government positions at the local level.

58. Driazgov, *Zapiski*, 162.

59. *IUP*, 1918, no. 3: 4.

60. Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," 107.

61. Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia' kommuna," 80; "K istorii oppozitsii," 108.

62. *Listok iunogo proletarii*, 1918, no. 1: 4.

63. Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia," 80.

64. *IUP*, 1918, no. 3: 3; Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia," 81-82.

65. Leske, Anisimova, Driazgov, Ivan, Kaiurov, Burmistrov, K. Surkov, and I. Ustinov.

66. Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia," 81; *IUP*, 1918, no. 3:4; Gerr, *Na puti v revoliutsii: rasskaz komsomol'ki*, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925) 81; Leske, "Istoriia' bez istorii," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, 1: 151.

67. P. Smorodin, "Za 4 goda," *Smena*, 31 August 1921: 2-3.

68. Leske, "Kak my organizovali," 113.

69. Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia," 81.

70. *Ibid.*, 80; Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," 109; Leske, "Kak my organizovali," 112.

71. The second proclamation was quoted in Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," 110.

72. *IUP*, 1918, no. 3: 4.

73. *IUP*, 1918, no. 4: 4.

74. *IUP*, 1918, no. 3: 4.

75. *Ibid.*, 3.

76. *IUP*, 1918, no. 5: 3.

77. Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," 108.

78. Gerr, *Na puti revoliutsii*, 31.

79. This fall from grace may have stemmed from an attempted "expropriation" on the part of some of the commune members. Driazgov, "Anarkhistskaia," 81-82. Interestingly, Leske did not participate in the expropriation.

80. Leske, "Kak my organizovali," 113.

81. First City, Second City, Smolny, and Spasskii were merged into the Central City District in September 1922.

82. *Raionnye sovety*, I: 319-20.

83. V. Sorokin, *Desiat' let odnogo raiona*, (Leningrad: Krasnaia gazeta, 1927),

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3-5.

84. Ibid., 3-6.

85. Tolmazov, "Pervye dni," *Smena*, 31 July 1921.

86. Driazgov, "Po proidennomu," 57-58; *Listok iunogo proletariia*, 1918, no. 1:3.

87. Sorokin, *Desiat' let*, 11.

88. Leske's insistence on admission being contingent on two recommendations from members echoed a similar policy that the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik party enacted in January 1918. V. G. Zakharov, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii KPSS, 1918-1945* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1980), vol. II, 107.

89. E. Gerr, *Na puti v revoliutsiiu*, 40-42.

90. Ivan Skorinko, *Molodezh' v bor'be za oktiabr'* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926), 35.

91. P. Deliusin, "Na vse eto," in *Na shturm: sbornik vospominanii komsomol'tsev-krasno-gvardeitsev*, ed. M. Afonin, (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1928), 113; Efim Tsetlin, "Kak sozyvalsia 1-yi vserossiiskii s"ezd RKSM," in RKSM, *Kommunisticheskoe dvizhenie molodezhi v Rossii; sbornik statei* (Moscow, 1920), 18-19.

92. Gerr, *Na puti*, 41.

93. Leske, Tiutikov, V. Sokolova, Afanasiyeva, Petropavlovskii, Alekseev, and Tsetlin.

94. P. Deliusin, "Na vse eto," 114; N. Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve (1917 g.)* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1930), 118.

95. "Konferentsiia soiuзов rabochei i krest'ianskoi molodezhi Severnoi Oblasti," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, ed. P. F. Kudelli, 129.

96. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 57.

97. For a different account, see "Konferentsiia soiuзов," 128.

98. V. Kulikov, "Petrogradskii Komsomol v dni Bresta," *Krasnaia letopis'*, 1934, no. II: 51-52. Apparently most of the Bolshevik leadership in Narva district had sided with the Left Communists in the dispute; therefore it is not surprising that V. Alekseev also opposed the peace. See Fraiman, *Revoliutsionnaia zashchita*, 268.

99. The editors of *Leninskoe pokolenie* denied this charge.

100. Mikhail Glebov, "O tret'em i chevertom Petrogradskikh Komitetakh SSRM," in *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 119.

101. Eduard Leske, "Istoriia' bez istorii," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, vol. I: 100.

102. Driazgov, "Po proidennomu," 57-58; Driazgov, "K istorii oppozitsii," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, 1926: 105.

103. The five districts included Vassilevskii Island (44 delegates), Vyborg (300), Nevskii (45), Petrograd (160), First City (110). *Petrogradskaia pravda*, 2 April; 3 April; 17 April; 18 April; 19 April; 22 April; 15 June; 20 June; 8 August 1918, p. 4.; *Iunyi kommunist*, 15 December 1918, 13; *Krasnaia gazeta*, 18 August; 2 September; 6 September 1918.

104. According to the district activist, N. Fokin, the members "did not know that the club should be considered part of the SSRM." In other words, the club was created independent of the SSRM; but at a time when the youth organization claimed hegemony over the Socialist youth movement, it is not surprising that the existence of an independent youth club was frowned upon. See Fokin, "Kak eto bylo," *Za 5 let*, 67-68. See also "Piataia obshchegorodskaiia konferentsiia," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 126.

105. Ibid.; Tolmazov, "Pervye dni," *Smena*, 31 August 1921, No. 19: 2; *Krasnaia gazeta*, 6 September, 1918. See also *IUK*, 1918, no. I: 13.

106. "Konferentsiia soiuзов rabochei i krest'ianskoi molodezhi," *Leninskoe pokolenie*,

129.

107. "Piataia konferentsiia," p. 127.

108. O. Ryvkin, "Nachalo," *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, ed. by A. Kirov, (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1925), 121; "Piataia obshchegorodskaia konferentsiia," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 127; Efim Tsetlin, "Kak sozyvalsia 1-yi vserossiiskii s'ezd," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 18.

109. M. Glebov, "O tret'em i chevertom Petrogradskikh Komitetakh SSRM," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 122.

110. L. Shatskin, "Ot bol'shevitskogo kruzhka k massovoi organizatsii," *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie*, 190; L. Shatskin, "Nachalo iunosheskogo dvizheniia v Rossii i pervyi s'ezd," *Kommunisticheskoe dvizhenie molodezhi sbornik statei*, 21; Aleksandr N. Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve*, 108; Anna Litveiko, "V 1917-om godu," *Iunost'*, III (1957): 5; E. N. Loginova, ed., *Vsegda v bor'be; vospominaniia veteranov Moskovskogo Komsomola* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1968), 38.

111. Ter Vaganian, "Voznikonovenie Soiuza III Internatsionala," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, I: 102; Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve*, 116.

112. *Ibid.*, 118-120, 131.

113. L. Fedorov, "III Internatsional pobedil," in *Na shturm: sbornik vospominanii komsomol'tsev-krasnogvardeitsev*, ed. M. Afonin, 64.

114. Ter Vaganian, "Voznikonovenie," 102; Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve*, 166.

115. Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve*, 165-66.

116. *Ibid.*, 164; Litveiko, "V 1917-om godu," 5; M. Dugachev, "Krasnaia Presnia--Soiuz Molodezhi III Internatsionala," *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 193-94.

117. Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve*, 100, 133.

118. Ter Vaganian, "Voznikonovenie," 103; N. Penkov, "U istokov," in *Revoliutsionnyi derzhite shag*, ed. A. Kholodkov (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1968), 26.

119. S. lastrebov, "My byli sredi pervykh," *Vsegda v bor'be*, 14-15.

120. B. Berzin and V. Martynov, "Stranitsy nashei iunosti," *Vsegda v bor'be*, 34.

121. Atsarkin, *Iunosheskoe dvizhenie v Moskve*, 179, 188.

122. M. Afonin, *Na shturm*, 155; lastrebov, "My byli sredi pervykh," 16; Shatskin, "Nachalo iunosheskogo dvizheniia," 21; Ryvkin, "Nachalo," 125.

123. Tsetlin, "Kak sozyvalsia i-yi s'ezd," 18; L. Fedorov, "III Internatsional pobedil," *Na shturm*, 74. Tsetlin explained in his reminiscences how, in addition to conducting work on a national level, the two-member organizational bureau had to revive the Moscow organization which by August had ceased to operate.

124. VLKSM, *Protokoly I S'ezda RKSM* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 7-8.

125. *Ibid.*, 9-11.

126. A major difference appears in the 1926 and 1934 editions of the Protocols to the First Congress. The 1926 version credits Evgeniia Gerr with the report on the League's program. The 1934 edition gives the credit to L. Shatskin. I believe that Shatskin delivered this key speech on the basis that he defended the majority position on the debates on the program. Usually the reporter had the right to close the discussion on a given issue. Also, Gerr seemed to have played a relatively secondary role in the rest of the congress.

127. Clearly, this is a major drawback in the use of the protocols as a main source. One can only conjecture that, of the thirteen arguments not included in the publication, a fair share came from the opposition.

128. *Protokoly I S'ezda*, 42-44, 53.

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129. Petkevich, from Voronezh, opposed the majority position in all three major controversies.

130. *Protokoly I S"ezda*, 45.

131. *Ibid.*, 47.

132. *Ibid.*, 51, 55.

133. *Ibid.*, 74.

134. *Ibid.*

135. *Ibid.*, 52.

136. *Ibid.*, 62-63.

137. *Ibid.*, 63. Again, the protocols give no tallies on this particular vote.

138. *Ibid.*, 69.

139. On 29 October 1918. See "Zakonoproekt o zhenskoi i detskoi trude," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, I: 111-13.

140. Not coincidentally, after the second conference on economic rights, the Petrograd Committee leadership changed. Mikhail Glebov and, later, Oskar Ryvkin, neither of whom were industrial workers, replaced the metal workers, Alekseev and Leske.





## **PART II**

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# **The Petrograd Komsomol at War: 1919-1920**

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# 3

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## Organizational Tasks at the Height of the Civil War

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On a cold December evening in 1919, "Vasia" Alekseev came home from the front to his young wife. Chilled to the bone and feverish, Vasia collapsed from fatigue; a few hours later he died. Weeks before, the Petrograd Komsomol leader, Nikolai Tolmachev, had also perished. Surrounded by White Army units near Luga, the wounded Tolmachev had spent his last bullet on himself. During the same offensive, Iudenich's second advance in 1919, another Petrograd League member, I. Arkhangel'skii, successfully blocked a White advance by destroying a bridge. To achieve his goal, he paid with his own life for he blew himself up along with the bridge and the White troops crossing it. Viktor Krumin, platoon commander, formerly a student activist and a member of the Petrograd Committee, was killed on the Polish front in 1920.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Civil War, Komsomol district offices hung "closed" signs on their doors, as their leaders and rank and file members went to the front, many never to return. Looking back at the period, the veteran Ivan Skorinko assessed that "only the superhuman energy of those left behind saved [the Komsomol] from disintegration."<sup>2</sup>

The Civil War intensified the Komsomol's initial instability. By their very nature, youth organizations can be unstable. Their leaders and members change rapidly, "growing" out of their organization as they move on to "adult" pursuits. The Komsomol's founding congress had barely disbanded when the country was thrown into a bloody civil war in which the League played a central role. The congress gave the Bolshevik youth organization a national presence and a political identity. However, its institutional consolidation would take place under the disruptive conditions imposed by the war.



## **Organizational Tasks**

During the protracted military conflict the League would be forced to address the problem of replenishing and maintaining its membership. To do so it needed the efficient and stable organizational structure that proved so elusive during that period. At the same time, the Komsomol asserted itself as the sole representative of the country's youth and sought to encompass not only workers and peasants but white-collar workers and students, too. During the war many students who supported the Bolsheviks formed Communist student organizations that the Komsomol perceived as potential rivals. The Petrograd organization welcomed their disbandment, but the incorporation of students and other non-workers was a mixed blessing. While it allowed the League to secure its hegemony over the entire Communist youth movement, the membership's changing social composition underscored the dilution of the League's working-class base.

The League confronted the problem of a leadership that found itself increasingly isolated from its local branches and its rank and file. Once again it faced the issue raised by the Leske opposition the year before: should the organization educate all youths or should it concentrate its efforts on youths who were already politically "conscious?" Was the Komsomol a broad organization intended to act as a political educator of all youths, or was it a forum for youths committed to the Revolution and the Communist party?

## **The Civil War: Coercion and Consensus-Building**

The Komsomol gave itself selflessly and wholeheartedly to the service of the Revolution, identifying its own fate with the outcome of the war. The workers' state was besieged from within and from without. The privileged classes of tsarist society, the officer corps, former political allies, the British Parliament and Navy, France, Japan and the United States, hunger and disease, all threatened the new state.<sup>3</sup> During the armed conflict the Bolsheviks lost control over much of the former empire, including Siberia, the Urals, the South, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and much of the Volga region. At times, even the fate of the citadel of the Revolution, Petrograd, hung in the balance.

The Bolsheviks came to power having forged a broad coalition of radicalized workers, war-weary soldiers and sailors, and land-hungry peasants. The Party articulated the most pressing

demands of those sectors, provided the movement a political program at its most radical moment, and planned the toppling of the increasingly unpopular Socialist government. By establishing close links with the popular movement in 1917, the Party acted as the vanguard it proclaimed to be since 1903. Yet the coalition that ushered in the Soviet government was relatively short-lived. After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty at the beginning of 1918, the informal coalition began to break down. At the conclusion of the war, the soldiers and sailors felt no pressing issue to keep them actively engaged in their erstwhile alliance. In fact the new state soon found itself with inadequate military forces. Most important, peasant support for the Bolsheviks, limited to the issue of land reform even at the height of the radical wave, began to crumble as the country became engulfed in civil war.

To deal with the economic chaos that had been present since 1917 and which the Civil War magnified, the new state resorted to economic measures known as "War Communism." To guarantee sustenance for the cities and the Red Army, the state imposed its control over fuel, the rationing of basic foodstuff, and a monopoly in grain that included grain requisitions. The peasants had few incentives to sell their products to urban markets. Money was devalued; moreover, the military effort devoured most of the declining industrial product, leaving little for individual consumers. With few products to buy from the cities, the peasants grew only enough grain for their families. The grain requisitions, designed to address the food crisis, engendered peasant hostility towards the new regime. But the Whites also engaged in the practice of grain confiscations, thereby neutralizing peasant hostility to the new government. Furthermore, the Whites' refusal to recognize the peasants' land seizures of 1917 sealed their fate with the peasants, who dreaded the restoration of landlords' rights over the land at least as much as they hated the requisitions.

The Bolsheviks encountered serious drawbacks even among the proletariat. Though the policy of grain requisitions pitted city against village, urban workers did not reap more bread for their tables. Indeed the Civil War aggravated the already difficult situation facing the cities since 1917. Unemployment and hunger undermined workers' support for the Party and state. As the factories closed down for lack of fuel and raw materials, the Party risked losing some of its constituency.<sup>4</sup> In 1917 a majority of party members came from the industrial working class, but this working-class majority dropped

during the Civil War--from 60 percent in 1917 to 40 percent in 1921.<sup>5</sup> To some extent, peasants recruited via the Red Army into the Party diluted the proportion of workers in the total membership even further, as did the influx of *intelligenty* and other non-workers.<sup>6</sup> The Party and its organizations, including the Komsomol, who identified themselves as working-class institutions, expressed their grave concern over the declining proportion of workers in their midsts. The war-time Komsomol concentrated much of its energies on seeking ways of expanding its working-class following.

But if the initial alliance between the Party and the peasantry was strained, the industrial working class proved more consistent in its support of Bolshevik goals throughout the Civil War. This support proved decisive for the survival of the new regime.<sup>7</sup> The Soviet state promoted loyal industrial workers to administrative and managerial positions. It needed active supporters and reliable personnel in the Red Army and in government administration and counted on Party members, the Komsomol, workers involved in Bolshevik organizations, and veterans of the Red Army to fill those positions.<sup>8</sup> To a greater extent than the peasants who remained outside the new army and political institutions, workers and Red Army soldiers had a stake in the victory of Soviet forces in the war. The Bolsheviks felt those sectors would be most supportive of their policies and goals.<sup>9</sup>

Leninism may be seen as an ideology of transformation, a vehicle to political power that would in turn bring about the birth of a new political and social culture.<sup>10</sup> From the beginning of this century, the distinguishing characteristic of Lenin's Marxism was the centrality it gave to the development of consciousness as a countermeasure against the spontaneous action of the working masses. Spontaneity by itself would lead to limited reforms; but under the guidance of a vanguard party, the revolutionary instincts of the working class could be channeled into the destruction of the status quo and the creation of a Socialist order and a new consensus. The Party's educational role was the cornerstone of both the destructive and reconstructive aspects of Lenin's vision of revolution. The vanguard Party would serve as "mentor" for the masses both before and after the revolution. Through its mass organizations, such as the Komsomol, the Party would guide the entire society in establishing socialism. During the Civil War the country experienced not only a political revolution, but the creation of a new economic, social, and cultural foundation. Everyday speech and manner of dress changed, as did family life and interpersonal relations; the arts and

cultural life witnessed an impressive renaissance. The Party served as a catalyst in that process and became identified in the popular mind with radical transformation.

The Bolsheviks could forge a consensus for their radical transformation of society among the urban population, especially the industrial working class, radical intellectuals and *intelligenty*, and even among politicized Red Army soldiers. Yet during the war the majority of the population remained outside the process. In part this reflected the cultural and political unpreparedness of the Russian population, especially the peasantry, for the Bolshevik agenda. The political and social revolution had taken place before the process of radicalization had taken roots in the worldview of most Russians. The development of revolutionary consciousness among Party members and the population in general and the preservation of close ties between the Party and the working class continued to be important goals to many party leaders. But the work of creating consensus lost its primacy and became subordinate to the struggle for survival.<sup>11</sup>

This is not to play down the Bolsheviks' mammoth agitational campaigns and other types of educational activities that began in earnest during the war. Modern states strive to reach all sectors of the population and integrate them into the body politic. Historically this has been done through the expansion of the school system and, in the twentieth century, through the use of the mass media. The Bolsheviks were particularly successful in using all forms of media to educate the public, including sectors of the population that had remained outside the political sphere.<sup>12</sup> But it cannot be denied that the Civil War prioritized military survival over all other concerns. Even the Komsomol, whose *raison d'être* was the creation of revolutionary consensus via the transformation of youth's political consciousness, subordinated educational functions to the need of the war effort. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Party emerged from the Civil War as an "embattled vanguard", its social base of support weakened, isolated from other political currents at home and abroad.<sup>13</sup> It has been argued that the Bolsheviks' isolation could have been averted had the Bolsheviks kept in the forefront the notion of consciousness and consensus that had been so important in the Party's ideology.<sup>14</sup>

Historians have looked back at the Civil War as the seedbed for the totalitarian state associated with Stalin's rule. Unquestionably, the Civil War transformed the political culture by introducing a



readiness to resort to coercion, centralized administration, and government through bureaucratic decree. The arbitrariness of the Red Army and the Cheka were hallmarks of the war. The brutal struggle for survival structured Bolshevik policies "and led to what many within the party would soon regard as unacceptable methods and ideological compromise."<sup>15</sup> In December 1917 Sovnarkom reorganized the former Military Revolutionary Committee into the Cheka (the acronym for the Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counterrevolution and Sabotage). Its functions included the fight against sabotage, concealment of supplies, threats to national security. In the summer of 1918 the Bolsheviks' initial allies, the Left SRs, declared war on the state in opposition to the peace of Brest-Litovsk and Soviet agrarian policies. The bourgeois and Anarchist press continued to operate in 1918, and from 1919 until the end of 1920 sectors of the SR's and Mensheviks cooperated with the beleaguered state. Nonetheless, the rupture with the Left SRs in 1918 marked the beginning of the one-party state and the Bolsheviks' perception of isolation before an overwhelming enemy. The protracted crisis justified the repression of opposition outside the Party. The political atmosphere, though hardly comparable to the rigidity later imposed by Stalin, stood in sharp contrast to the flexibility and tolerance of discussion that characterized politics in 1917. Even loyal autonomous organizations such as the trade unions and the Komsomol found their sphere of activities curtailed.<sup>16</sup>

The Civil War unleashed turmoil, anarchy, and chaos, which the new state countered with the bureaucratic and centralized administration that came to characterize post-revolutionary Russia. The implementation of War Communism policies multiplied state bureaucracies at geometrical rates.<sup>17</sup> However, one must not exaggerate the Civil War's impact on Russia's administration. An overdeveloped bureaucracy was one of the legacies of the tsarist past. Marx had predicted that the workers' revolution would take place in a society where bourgeois democratic traditions and institutions were well established and could then be assimilated by the new ruling class. This was not the case in Russia.<sup>18</sup> In the Komsomol's experience, bureaucratic control and centralization were means of dealing with the seemingly endless crisis, a crisis that decimated the organization's ranks and disrupted all activities.

The Bolsheviks were committed to armed conflict and to the dictatorship of a working class that constituted a minority of the population; therefore, one can argue that they were at least willing to

risk authoritarian rule and other forms of coercion.<sup>19</sup> The Civil War polarized society, leaving permanent scars; the experience of foreign intervention and the collaboration of internal "enemies" with foreign interventionists contributed to popular approbation for the use of coercive means to protect the Revolution. Grafted on to a political culture unfamiliar with Western democratic traditions was the overriding need to emerge victorious in the life and death conflict. For people who joined or supported the Bolsheviks during the conflict, "the party was a fighting brotherhood in the most literal sense."<sup>20</sup> This sentiment was especially palpable within the Komsomol, whose members saw themselves as warriors of the revolution. The war was idealized in memoirs and songs, in history books. For the Komsomol of that generation the Civil War experience became an integral part of their political culture and worldview.

### The Komsomol and the Military Effort

During the Civil War the Komsomol recruited between 50,000 and 60,000 youths into the Red Army, the Red Commanders' courses, and the grain requisition detachments or *prodotriady*.<sup>21</sup> Beginning in 1918 and continuing throughout the Civil War, individual League organizations conducted local mobilizations. Petrograd played a particularly important role in recruitment drives. In 1919 Ryvkin attributed the growing prestige that the Petrograd organization enjoyed among the city's adult workers (i.e., Party and working-class activists) to the League's active role in recruitment drives. Outstripping the military participation of other regional Komsomol organizations, by the fall of 1919 the Petrograd League had given over 70 percent of its members to the Red Army or to the political departments working with Army units.<sup>22</sup>

The year 1919 was the most critical period for the new regime. Soviet Russia was reduced to its medieval borders while the machinery of government broke down together with the transportation and communications systems. The crisis began in March with Kolchak's thrust into European Russia from his stronghold in Siberia. Kolchak aimed to join forces with the British troops in Archangel. The Soviet Executive Committee decreed a mobilization of Party, trade union, and Komsomol members in April 1919 and it met with the League's wholehearted support. The Komsomol Central Committee ordered the first of three nationwide mobilization of League members.

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A mobilization commission, headed by V. Petropavlovskii and M. Gleron, hosted a mass meeting at the Tauride Palace under the slogan "All to arms! To the Urals!" At the Admiralty plant a meeting of young workers closed with passionate pledges to defend the Revolution.<sup>23</sup> Within a few weeks, the Petrograd Committee had recruited close to a thousand members, surpassing the 20 percent quota imposed on the city's Party and working-class organizations. The Komsomol had carried out its mobilization faster than those sponsored by the city's trade unions and the Communist party.<sup>24</sup> In May the Komsomol Petrograd Committee created a special cyclist [samokatnaia] company with close to 300 members. Its commander was M. P. Aleksandrov and its commissar, I. Kankin. This company carried out intelligence operations against White activities inside the city, as well as military duties.<sup>25</sup>

The spring was a particularly demoralizing time for the pro-Soviet forces. Kolchak scored a number of victories in the spring, threatening the Volga region. But Kolchak was only one of many serious threats to the regime. In May and June the Northwestern Army under Iudenich threatened Petrograd. In the city the League mobilized entire district committees and formed three special Komsomol detachments.<sup>26</sup> In the spring and fall of 1919 the Petrograd Komsomol sent 1,500 members to the Iudenich front alone.<sup>27</sup> Scarcity of basic goods in the cities, rebellions in the Don, the Ukraine, and the Volga, and the ominous presence of the British and other foreign forces compounded the military problems and created a sense of crisis throughout the country.

The ability of the Soviet government to mobilize support was decisive in breaking Kolchak's advances. By the time Kolchak attacked, the Red Army was well on its way to being transformed from the enthusiastic but undisciplined Red Guard units to the more effective Red Army. By May and June Kolchak's forces began to retreat east. In July the capital of the Ural territory, Ekaterinburg, fell to the Reds.<sup>28</sup> Yet no sooner was the Soviet government assured of Kolchak's retreat than it faced an even more formidable enemy: Denikin's Southern Army, which began its drive on Moscow in the summer of 1919.

In the summer and early fall of 1919 Denikin's forces captured vast areas of the Ukraine. In October, at the height of the campaign, Denikin's army occupied Kursk, Voronezh, Chernigov, Orel, and Tula--the latter two cities on the direct road to Moscow. Denikin came within 80 miles of the capital. The new crisis shortened the Second

Komsomol Congress which closed after decreeing the second nationwide mobilization of all members sixteen and older. The only exception was the Petrograd organization which was suffering the onslaught of Iudenich's second attack.

In October Iudenich's forces reached the suburbs of Petrograd. He had the support of the British, who aided Iudenich in his two attacks on Petrograd in the spring and fall of 1919. The British also attacked Kronstadt in September 1919. The city geared all its energies at defeating the invader. For its part, the Komsomol Petrograd Committee ordered its local branches to carry out a total mobilization of all members sixteen and older. This was the third total mobilization for the city's Komsomol. Within hours 500 members had reported for mobilization. The city and provincial Komsomol created over fifty detachments to fight Iudenich: the largest was headed by the Petrograd Committee and consisted of 500 members. The Petrograd Komsomol membership did not exceed 8,000 at any point in 1919. The 2,500 members it recruited that year (not counting the members sent to commanders' courses and grain detachments) represented an impressive contribution to the military effort. By the end of October Iudenich's troops had been pushed out of Petrograd and its environs. In November Iudenich left Russia; Petrograd was now safe. The defeat of Iudenich's forces coincided with the collapse of Denikin's Southern Army.<sup>29</sup>

Like Kolchak, Denikin was hurt by his inability to establish a popular government in the territories he occupied. The refusal to recognize peasant land seizures deprived the Whites of widespread peasant support. Their nationalist policy alienated the non-Russian nationalities who could have been allies. The Whites were made up of disparate forces that proved unable to create a united effort against the Reds. The Whites were unable to bridge the great gulf between themselves and the masses; they could not appeal to the working class, who was Socialist by tradition, but neither could they find active support among the peasantry, which identified the Whites with the former landlords.<sup>30</sup> For all intents and purposes, the Civil War had been decided in favor of the Soviets by the end of 1919.

Throughout the war the Bolsheviks had to contend with the scarcity of politically reliable officers from the old tsarist army. Though by the end of the Civil War about 50,000 former tsarist officers were used by the Red Army, they were viewed suspiciously and were paired off with political commissars. The League sent thousands of promising members to commanders' courses, where they



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became the core of the new officer cadres. The Komsomol became a political agent within the Red Army. By the fall of 1919 the Petrograd organization alone had sent over 2,000 members to the Red Army's political departments. Komsomol activists served as political commissars in the Army, carried out propaganda among the wounded, and participated in the apprehension of deserters.

Complying with a Central Committee edict making military training mandatory for all members, the local organizations created reserve units to train all local Komsomol members, including those under the age of sixteen, in the use of firearms.<sup>31</sup> Most important, the responsibility for the political education prior to the enlistment of youths sixteen to eighteen years old rested with the Komsomol. Conscription, which began in April 1918, affected all workers and poor peasants; members of the bourgeoisie were given tasks in the rear. In Petrograd city and province alone, the Komsomol prepared almost 20,000 youths prior to enlistment in the course of the Civil War.<sup>32</sup>

Besides participating in the numerous recruitment drives, the Komsomol fulfilled other crucial functions related to the war effort. It undertook to explain the situation at the front to young workers and peasants. Komsomol support activities included fund-raising campaigns for the Red Army. In the months between the Kolchak offensive and the Second Komsomol Congress, the League collected over 140,000 rubles for the Army.<sup>33</sup>

The war touched all League members; to be a Komsomolite in Petrograd implied serving the war effort. Young women, a minority of the total membership, also went to the front, where many took up arms, though most served primarily as nurses and in political-educational functions. Those members too young to be mobilized (under sixteen years of age) strengthened the city's defenses and readied the barricades. The mobilizations and the drain of activists away from the League hindered the organization's growth. To prevent the devastating effects that the earlier mobilization against the Germans had on the Petrograd organization in 1918, the Komsomol leadership sought to ensure continuity by requiring that each district committee retain a small cadre of activists.<sup>34</sup>

Despite these efforts, the war bled the district committees. By June 1919 the First City district, the most severely hit, had lost 150 activists, while Vyborg district lost 160 by the fall. With politically inexperienced girls and fourteen- and fifteen-year-old boys as the League's new core, district committees, factory schools,

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and clubs began to collapse.<sup>35</sup> The situation became particularly critical in the fall, after the mobilizations against Denikin and Iudenich. By mid-December, the city's Komsomol membership had dropped to its lowest level that year: a thousand members.<sup>36</sup>

This experience led the Komsomol leadership to adopt a more cautious position in the spring of 1920 when the country became embroiled in another war, this time against Poland. In April 1920 the Poles under Marshall Pilsudsky attacked Russian territory. Immediately, Russians were once again mobilized. During this third general mobilization 2,500 League members volunteered.<sup>37</sup> In contrast to earlier recruitment drives, only rank and file members were allowed to volunteer because it was deemed crucial to leave guiding organs intact during this period of internal organizational reconstruction. The League called on its membership to concentrate its energies on civilian efforts to reverse the country's economic disintegration. This did not mean that the Komsomol would eschew all military work. In addition to sending volunteers to the Polish front, the Komsomol continued to engage in such activities as the apprehension of deserters, the training of commanders, pre-enlistment military training of all Komsomol members, work among wounded soldiers, and helping the families of soldiers.<sup>38</sup> It was clear that the League was making organizational work its priority. The civil strife that had battered the country in the previous two years was coming to an end.

The war molded the character of the early Komsomol. As we shall see below, the decimation of the rank and file membership and of the leading cadres had the effect of reinforcing centralizing and hierarchical tendencies. Just as important, the concentration of energies on the war limited the organization's possibilities for developing its own economic and cultural programs. In effect, the war pushed the Komsomol away from those activities where it might have created its own space. The militarization of the youth organization limited the scope for independent action that the defense of the particular interests of youth potentially entailed. The war, after all, elicited integrative forms of organizational work rather than the more particularistic activities that the youth movement envisioned in 1917.

Yet from the perspective of the youth leadership, the militarization of the Komsomol had positive aspects as well. The war conferred on the organization a special status and the recognition by the Party and the state that it alone could represent all youths.

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Paradoxically, the function of facilitator in the recruitment drives, which deprived the League of a stable base and continuous work, also gave it a special position within Soviet society and a unique relationship with the Communist party. From the Party's point of view, the League had proven its political reliability, its commitment to the state, and its capacity to erect an efficient machinery.

## Revival and Dispersal

In the months between the First and Second Congresses the Petrograd Komsomol experienced a period of relative but uneven growth. That growth reinforced the city's organization's stature as a model for the popular mass leagues that the Komsomol leadership aspired to establish throughout the Soviet republic. The revival of the Petrograd organization began in early 1919. After the First Congress, the district organizations, which had grown increasingly weak in 1918, virtually disappeared.<sup>39</sup> To reverse this trend, the Komsomol's Petrograd Committee launched a drive in February and March 1919 that resulted in the establishment of local branches in eleven city districts with a membership that reached 4,800 by late March.<sup>40</sup>

The year 1919 marked the take-off period in terms of the League's ability to recruit new members and establish its organizational apparatus. Yet in a basic sense, numerical growth was ephemeral throughout 1919 as new members were channeled to the military fronts. This prevented the League from maintaining steady growth in membership. For example, the League's membership fell from 7,000 in August 1919 to 4,500 by the time the Second Congress convened in October that year. By December 1919 the membership had dropped to under one thousand.<sup>41</sup> This uneven expansion in membership deprived the League of a stable base and hindered the development of the League's apparatus.

During the limited revival of 1919, the social composition of the new district committees became more heterogeneous than that of their 1917 counterparts. Those districts that had 200 or more members in the spring of 1919--Vyborg, Narva, First City, and Vasilevskii--had predominantly working-class memberships.<sup>42</sup> But students constituted the core of Second City and Okhta districts, while Spasskii had a majority of white-collar workers in its ranks.<sup>43</sup> Another significant change took place in Vyborg and Vasilevskii,

where young women made up the majority of the members.<sup>44</sup> These changes created tensions within the organization as the number of male industrial workers diminished in proportion to the total membership.

At the height of Petrograd's organization's spring revival, *Petrogradskaia pravda* gave indications that the Petrograd Party leadership was dissatisfied with the Komsomol's work among young factory workers. At the League's Sixth City Conference Zinoviev described his encounters with anti-Bolshevik factory youths at the time of the Left SR political offensive in the summer of 1918. That summer widespread discontent on the part of industrial workers expressed itself through strike activity in major cities. The SR's and Mensheviks took an active part in this strike movement. In Petrograd the Obukhov Factory proved to be a major center of SR activity. Following the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty the political alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs, began to crumble. In the summer of 1918, the Left-SR's declared war on the Bolsheviks and the new state, and began a campaign of political assassinations that claimed the lives of the German ambassador and several leading Bolsheviks. In that political environment, Zinoviev implied that the League was at least partly responsible for anti-Party sentiment among young workers because of its failure to expand its activities among non-Communist youth. Zinoviev called on the Komsomol to open its doors to the proletarian masses to steer them from other political alliances. Though as a whole urban workers remained committed to the Soviet government, it was imperative to nurture their commitment through agitational work. The Komsomol was expected to play an active role in agitational campaigns despite its declining membership. The Komsomol's work coincided with other such peaceful efforts to reach out to workers during the political crisis. It also coincided with the Cheka's offensive, which included arrests and harassment of opposition parties.<sup>45</sup>

That Zinoviev, Petrograd's Party chief and chairman of the city's Soviet, took an active interest in the Komsomol showed the Party's high esteem for that organization. The League was viewed as an important political and social force in revolutionary Petrograd. Zlata Lilina, Zinoviev's wife and an active participant in cultural and educational affairs, became the Party's representative within the Komsomol's Petrograd Committee.

In the next months *Petrogradskaia pravda* continued to criticize the League, urging it to develop its base within the factory



collectives. Underscoring the organization's shortcomings, the newspaper's editors pointed out that, while Petrograd had a thousand enterprises that employed at least fifty young workers each, the Komsomol only had 150 factory collectives in the entire city.<sup>46</sup> While 40,000 youths worked in the city's factories, the Komsomol had 5,000 members. Even if all members were workers, this accounted for, at most, 12.5 percent of the city's young workers.<sup>47</sup> Despite the modest recovery of the Petrograd, the Red Army's recruitment drives continued to erode the League's working-class base. By the summer, even working-class districts such as Vyborg and Narva lamented the loss of young workers. In Narva, young workers became a minority of the district's membership.<sup>48</sup>

This crisis reflected the continued devastation of the city's industrial working class in general. In 1919 the number of industrial workers in Petrograd had dropped to 124,000, under half of the 1917 work force.<sup>49</sup> By the beginning of 1920 slightly over 70,000 workers remained employed in the city's factories.<sup>50</sup> Workers in specific industries fared worse. The fuel crisis in 1919 and 1920 resulted in the closure of most of the large metal works. In 1920, of the forty seven large metal works, only sixteen were operating.<sup>51</sup> If in 1919 the metal industry employed only 24 percent of its 1917 work force, by 1920 that force had been reduced to 14.7 percent of the 1917 figure.<sup>52</sup>

Between September 1918 and the end of the Civil War close to 40,000 Petrograd industrial workers were mobilized into the Red Army.<sup>53</sup> Another 20,000 participated in the grain detachments.<sup>54</sup> The prolonged armed conflict removed thousands from the work force; but epidemics and hunger also took their enormous toll. The period was even more catastrophic for factory youths. When compared to their participation in 1917, the number of youths aged fifteen to seventeen dropped significantly in proportion to adult workers and even more sharply in absolute terms. The depletion in the ranks of factory youths was reflected in the low proportion of young workers in the Komsomol. Indicative of the problem, at the Second Komsomol Congress in October 1919 young workers and peasants accounted for 205 of the delegates as compared to 239 students and white-collar workers. The overwhelming majority of the worker and peasant delegates most likely came from a working class rather than from a peasant background since the League had not begun its agitational work among peasants by the time the Second Congress met. But even if all 205 had been workers, they made up fewer than half of the

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delegates, and they were even less represented within the leadership. As the Komsomol strove to exert its hegemony as the sole representative of all Russian youth--no longer only young workers--it had to incorporate peasants, students, and white-collar workers. But the incorporation of peasants and office workers did not have the impact that the admission of Communist students had on the Komsomol. Within a short time, numerous students gained access to leadership positions in the League.

The Komsomol compensated for the debilitating effects of the massive military mobilizations of the period and the dispersal of its rank and file by developing a systematic approach to agitation and organizational growth. During the period from 1919 to 1920 the Petrograd Komsomol established a permanent organizational structure that included factory, district, and provincial committees, schools for agitators, a regional Komsomol newspaper, *Smena*, and a journal, *Iunyi proletarii*.

The Komsomol's revival of 1919 had not begun spontaneously but, rather, stemmed from the efforts of the Petrograd Committee. Perpetuating the organizational pattern established in 1918, the Petrograd Committee sent staff members to organize new collectives before the convocation of city conferences. In March, before the Seventh City Conference, the student activist M. Gleron led a successful campaign in the First City district, while N. Fokin, the Vyborg veteran, went to Petrograd district, where the organization had dissolved since the previous conference.<sup>55</sup> Activists were not necessarily from the same districts they were sent to organize, though significantly, those districts that had their own local organizers tended to grow more rapidly. This was the case in Petrograd and Vyborg districts, both of which expanded their activities under the leadership of the local activists, Petr Smorodin and Nikolai Fokin. These Petrograd Committee activists were full-time, salaried staff.<sup>56</sup> Many were students. Though working-class cadres continued to hold considerable power within the city's Komsomol leadership--e.g., I. Kankin, P. Smorodin, and N. Fokin--they were no longer employed in production but, instead, were League employees.

The Petrograd Committee kept close ties with its activists.<sup>57</sup> In the revival of early 1919 the Petrograd Committee tried to assign an organizer to every collective. It met with its district organizers twice per week and in this manner kept more control over the budding local branches.<sup>58</sup> The stress was on unity and discipline within the

core group of organizers as a means of preventing possible "disorganizing elements" from hindering the League's work.<sup>59</sup> The Petrograd Committee's control of its staff included public reprimands, printed in the journal *Iunyi proletarii* for such infractions as failure to attend Petrograd Committee meetings or breaches of internal discipline.<sup>60</sup>

Initially, the Petrograd Committee lacked sufficient personnel to serve the needs of the expanding network of collectives. This afforded a degree of flexibility to club and committee leaders.<sup>61</sup> But the youth leadership felt the need for a more methodical, planned approach to the political and organizational training of League activists.<sup>62</sup> The Petrograd Committee first tackled the problem of internal political education by opening its own school of agitators in February 1919.<sup>63</sup> When this failed, it sent forty activists to Moscow to the political school established by the Komsomol's Central Committee. Though this proved more successful, material conditions, especially the food shortages, forced many Petrograd activists to leave the program. In the course of 1919 the Petrograd Komsomol came to depend on the Party to provide training for youth activists. Through its own political circles and central political school and the Party courses, the Petrograd Komsomol trained an impressive six hundred activists by the fall of 1919.<sup>64</sup>

The training of new activists could not keep pace with the League's growing needs. As a youth organization, the Komsomol had a relatively small pool of politically experienced, trained activists. Most important, the demands that the Party and the government placed on the already strained cadre of activists further compounded the shortage of organizers. The Vyborg leader, N. Fokin, criticized the situation and described how, as a youth representative to a factory committee, he was saddled, first, with administrative responsibilities, later, with representing the factory at government bodies, and eventually, with duties at the district center. The latter task forced Fokin to end his work as a Komsomol activist at his factory during a critical time for the League (following the first mobilization).<sup>65</sup> The constant absorption of cadres by Party and state and the depletion of the rank and file by the military effort made for discontinuity and instability in the Komsomol's growth.

When the Petrograd Committee began its membership drive in the spring of 1919 N. Tatarov set the guidelines to be used in the creation of new district committees. Tatarov's blueprint assumed that the new organizations would be created by League activists who

accepted the Komsomol program in its entirety. A group of activists would form an organizational bureau that would inform the Party and government organs of its existence. Only then would the group register new members and call a general meeting at which elections would be held. The plan thus circumscribed the initiative of the base itself.<sup>66</sup> Significantly, Tatarov foresaw the possibility that such a committee would be cut off from the masses and, to counter this, he suggested the convocation of periodic delegates' meetings. However, such delegates' meetings had no explicit function beyond serving as links between the leadership and the masses. In addition, Tatarov advised each district committee member to become fully acquainted with at least one factory collective in his or her district. Thus Tatarov assumed that the leadership at the district level would not also be working at a local enterprise.<sup>67</sup> The concern for adequate numbers of reliable activists betrayed a tendency on the part of the Bolshevik youth movement to rely on increasingly bureaucratic means to organize its followers. This trend, which had taken roots in the crisis of 1918, remained the dominant current during the Civil War. It manifested itself at the district, city, provincial, and national levels.

Increasingly, the Petrograd Committee imposed stipulations on its district organizations. If in March it required the district committees to submit weekly reports of their activities, by July it set the days on which each and every committee had to meet.<sup>68</sup> By late August the Petrograd Committee established a troika to oversee the districts' recruitment efforts before the Second National Congress.<sup>69</sup> The troika aimed to guarantee uniformity and predictability in the organization's operations.

Though the trend toward centralization manifested itself unmistakably during 1919, the Petrograd Committee cannot be seen as a monolith in relation to its component organizations. The committee could not consolidate its authority as effectively as it might have in more tranquil times since it continuously lost its own leadership to the war effort. The districts operated with some degree of autonomy from the Petrograd Committee and, especially, from one another. In a critique of the organization's life, an article in *Iunyi proletarii* described its de facto structure to be that of a federation. The article attributed this phenomenon, in part, to the perpetuation of district loyalties and the ensuing divisions that were evident even within the Komsomol military detachments.<sup>70</sup> The divisions possibly



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concealed class animosities between those districts with predominantly student and white-collar-worker memberships and those with a working-class base.

### The Search for Organizational Stability

The Second Komsomol Congress met in Moscow on 5-8 October 1919 during Denikin's offensive against Central Russia and Iudenich's second attack on Petrograd. It adjourned prematurely, announcing yet another Komsomol military mobilization. In the fall of 1919 the Petrograd League, once more decimated, experienced a profound crisis, the worst since 1918. The crisis sharpened those problems that the League faced since the beginning of the Civil War. Immediately after the Second Congress, the Petrograd organization virtually collapsed. The cumulative effect of the numerous mobilizations led to the near disintegration of the rank and file. Left without activists, the League could not revive its agitational work and other activities. At a time when the leadership had begun to feel impotent, the Party continued to pressure the League to expand its working-class base. Simultaneously, the growing presence of students and white-collar workers created friction within the weakened organization.

By mid-October, almost all League members between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two had either joined the Communist detachments or the units of the Seventh Army, which was responsible for defending Petrograd.<sup>71</sup> All League activity stopped. Only two or three activists remained in each district committee, and many of them were young women who had relatively limited organizational experience.<sup>72</sup>

The Komsomol and Party leadership became alarmed at the depletion of activist cadres and at the loss of the organization's working-class following. On 15 October the Petrograd Committee's agitational department summoned twenty-five activists to an emergency meeting.<sup>73</sup> Fewer than a quarter of the general membership continued to attend general meetings. Recognizing that the most talented youth activists tended to devote their energies to Party work rather than to the League, the Party leadership posited a dual solution to the depletion of Komsomol cadres. To begin with, it called for the removal of the best activists from their Komsomol military detachments and their return to organizational work, especially to the district branches, where there were only a handful

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of activists. It also called on Party activists to pay special attention to the League. Specifically, the Party's Central Committee recommended that all young Party members join the Komsomol and help establish Komsomol factory collectives.<sup>74</sup> Shortly thereafter, apparently as part of an agreement reached by the Party and Komsomol leadership, the youth detachments within the Red Army were disbanded.<sup>75</sup> Apparently the independence of the Komsomol detachments was cause for concern within the Red Army and the Party.

Upon the return of its activists to civilian life, the League began to re-establish its organizational structure, beginning with its local collectives and district committees. The latter replaced the troikas.<sup>76</sup> The Petrograd Committee reorganized itself into three departments: organizational, statistical/informational, and agitational. As part of this attempt to revive the organization, the Petrograd Committee conducted a citywide re-registration of all its members at the end of November. In so doing, it aimed to determine the actual membership and, just as important, to rid the League of "undesirable" members.<sup>77</sup> With the exception of Party members, all other League members reapplying for readmission were required to provide recommendations from Party or League members. Thus, on the one hand, the Party was expressing concern with the League's dissolution; on the other hand, the Petrograd Committee was establishing a powerful filter as part of its effort to revitalize the organization.<sup>78</sup> As a consequence of these restrictions and of the continued high unemployment levels among youth, the re-registration drive yielded, at first, a mere eight hundred members.<sup>79</sup> Though the membership grew to 2,000 by the second week in December, that figure represented no more than 5 percent of the city's young industrial workers, estimated to be between 40,000 and 50,000.<sup>80</sup>

The Petrograd Committee favored a purge of its old membership as a prerequisite to the "renewal" of the rank and file.<sup>81</sup> To recruit new members from among factory workers it planned a "week of inspection," which, besides ascertaining the number of young workers in the city's factories and shops and their working conditions, would also give the organization the visibility it needed, particularly in the area of labor protection.<sup>82</sup> District League branches asked factory committees to inform the League as to the number of youths working in each local enterprise.

In reality, however, the League relied on the Party's cadres to serve as the backbone for this new expansion. In the Vasilevskii

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Island Komsomol organization, for example, the majority of the members were also Party members who were under twenty-one years of age.<sup>83</sup> This pattern of reliance on Party members for League cadres, pervasive since the spring revival of 1919, had prompted Zinoviev to censure the League for becoming an exclusive organization of young Communists. At the League's Tenth City Conference (5 January 1920) Zinoviev once again criticized the city's Komsomol organization for its weakness and suggested that the leadership should call a conference of non-Party (unaffiliated) youths to replenish its base.<sup>84</sup>

In the early part of 1920 the Petrograd organization continued to be plagued by weak local collectives and by its inability to retain its base. On paper, it seemed that the district organizations had grown since the re-registration. For example, First City district reported 1,400 new members in mid-January. Yet at the same meeting, League activists admitted that fewer than half of all registered collectives were actually working and, that as a rule, fewer than one-third of the members attended general meetings.<sup>85</sup> The delegates adopted a resolution whereby they acknowledged the dispersal of the majority of the district organizations. As an antidote, they called for the creation of new collectives and the strengthening of existing clubs and collectives. A member of the Petrograd Committee, Itkina, proposed the convocation of a non-Party youth conference as a source of new members. However, most of the delegates felt that the organization was not strong enough to launch such a membership drive. Significantly, the majority rejected Itkina's suggestion despite Zinoviev's earlier pronouncements on its behalf.

The vote unmasked the tension felt by the Petrograd Komsomol leadership. They resisted expanding beyond the capabilities of the League's organizational apparatus; at the same time, they felt pressured to recruit more members. Without concrete data, one can only speculate on the nature of the particular dynamic. At the Tenth City Conference Zinoviev expressed his confidence that the Komsomol leadership had the resources to conduct a successful conference for non-Party or politically unaffiliated youth. Yet the League had already initiated the convocation of another conference, one designed for students. In all likelihood, the League's leadership realized they could not conduct both types of campaigns. At the Tenth Conference

the League leadership chose to concentrate its efforts on student recruitment in order to break the autonomous student organization, a potential rival.

### Students and Workers: A Debate on Social Composition

Leagues or associations of Communist students first emerged in late 1918, many of them sponsored by local Party committees.<sup>86</sup> Some Komsomol branches reached an early working relationship with their student counterparts in districts that had strong student associations, as was the case in the Central City district. This seemed to be especially the case in districts where the Komsomol's presence remained weak.<sup>87</sup> In the spring of 1919 the Komsomol Central Committee resolved that two Communist youth organizations could not exist simultaneously and initiated a merger of the Communist Student League with the Komsomol. But Komsomol leaders did not intend this to be an equal partnership in which the Student League could retain some of its political clout. Instead, the Komsomol asked Communist students to join its ranks individually and participate in the League's educational activities.<sup>88</sup> By accepting students on an individual basis and not as an organized group, the League sought to limit the power of its new partners.

As expected, the merger met with opposition from activists in both the Komsomol and the Communist Student League. At the Eighth City Conference, the activists Smorodin and Slosman expressed opposing views on the merger. Smorodin, who rejected Slosman's contention that students had undergone an ideological transformation and were now ready to join the Komsomol, warned of the consequences "of mixing sheep and wolves." Viktor Krumin, the chairman of the Student League, also spoke against the consolidation.<sup>89</sup> Notwithstanding these objections, the delegates approved the merger on the grounds that there should not be a separate student association. Students were given a department or bureau within the Petrograd Committee and the local committees, while Krumin became a member of the Petrograd Committee.<sup>90</sup>

Many Komsomol leaders remained wary of the impact that students would have on the youth organization. Shortly after the merger, Oskar Ryvkin, the chairman of the Komsomol Central Committee, gave a cautious assessment of the union in an article in *Iunyi kommunist*, in which he stated that the majority of students remained largely hostile to Soviet power. While admitting the need



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for a single youth organization, Ryvkin also saw dangers inherent in the incorporation of students into the Komsomol. The League must not be inundated by "petty bourgeois" elements and must, therefore, strengthen its working-class cadre and, simultaneously, limit the admission of students by requiring recommendations.<sup>91</sup> In the opposing camp, there were members who opposed the creation of admission restrictions against students on the basis that such barriers would exclude those youths who, like young workers, also supported the Revolution. Such members viewed the Komsomol as an amalgam of young workers and students who shared the same political beliefs.<sup>92</sup>

At the Second Congress Ryvkin adopted a more conciliatory tone in his report from the Central Committee. He pointed out that many students, "attracted by Communism's capacity to save humanity," joined the youth movement and gave it good activists. At the same time, he spoke of the merger between the Komsomol and the Communist student leagues as a *fait accompli*. Ryvkin justified the purge of the student leagues' membership that preceded the formal fusion as necessary, in part because the Komsomol lacked the human resources to conduct work among secondary school students. Such work would be the responsibility of "reliable" student league leaders, who, in turn would be guided by the Komsomol organs.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time, the Central Committee's position on admission requirements was less conciliatory than Ryvkin's remarks at the congress. While it made membership unconditionally open to all young workers and peasants, it required that students provide recommendations from Komsomol or Party members. Through this provision, the Central Committee attempted to filter out those members from the Communist student leagues who were seen as undesirable. Reiterating the fears of a student takeover of the Komsomol, Ryvkin defended the restrictions on the grounds that they were designed to exclude only those members of the intelligentsia who viewed admission to the Komsomol as a means of attaining Party membership.<sup>94</sup> The Central Committee also intended to prevent in-coming students from outnumbering and overwhelming young workers and peasants.

Despite these efforts, the controversy over students persisted well after the Second Congress. Many League members expressed their dismay at the growing number of students and other *intelligenty*. Concurrently, many students resisted the growing pull toward their integration into the Komsomol. This friction would persist because

the incorporation of students became a necessary, if problematic, step in the Komsomol's quest for sole representation of Soviet youth.

A tradition of working-class suspicion of intellectuals colored how Komsomol activists viewed students. Generations earlier, politically active workers expressed ambivalent feelings toward the same *intelligenty* who brought them radical politics. The radical intellectuals, often students, were admired for their knowledge; but, at the same time, workers often saw them as bearers of an alien culture who were more at ease with other *intelligenty*, irrespective of political persuasion, than with workers. For that perceived spiritual kinship with others of their class, intellectuals were distrusted by workers. The Revolution witnessed a surge in anti-intellectualism, especially on the part of left-wing Bolshevik groups, such as the Komsomol. For many, anti-intellectualism merged with the rejection of the old order and old elites. Culture was merely another form of oppression that the Revolution was relegating to the past. As a Bolshevik organization the Komsomol, like the Party, had drawn definite political conclusions based on the theory of class conflict. The Soviet state's enemies came from the old privileged classes. Thus students and all intellectuals or *belorukie* were suspect. "From the Bolshevik standpoint, it was impossible to regard all citizens as equal when some of them were class enemies of the regime."<sup>95</sup> The Komsomol, which identified itself as a proletarian organization, would have preferred to exclude the students as "class enemies"; but it could stand no parallel organizations that could act as competitors. In late 1919 and in 1920 the Komsomol would seek to balance its quest for hegemony within the entire youth movement with its expressed commitment to maintain working-class youth in the organization's leadership. Civil War exigencies and the vicissitudes in the Komsomol's development hindered that balance. Consistently, the League lost working-class members while its student component expanded.

In the fall of 1919 the controversy over the League's social composition had not abated. Such veterans of the youth movement as N. Fokin and A. Leont'ev criticized the impact that the so-called "white-handed" non-proletarians were having on the organization. Leont'ev pointed out that the military recruitment drives deprived the organization of the most politically developed activists, those who gave the local organizations their mass character. Only the least active and inexperienced members were left behind. This was especially problematic in organizations with predominantly

intellectual memberships or in those where *intelligently* provided the leadership. According to Leont'ev, such organizations tended to refrain from mass work.<sup>96</sup> In a similar vein, Fokin chided those members who limited their activities to "writing articles" and to "idle talk." "Don't be a white hand; only labor is eternal," asserted Fokin's rules for League members.<sup>97</sup>

A breakdown of the League's social composition for late 1919 is unavailable. But, judging by the figures for January 1920, Fokin and Leont'ev had based their comments on concrete changes in the League's makeup. By the first weeks of 1920, the proportion of young workers in the Petrograd organization had declined to 47.7 percent of the total membership. In contrast, students and white-collar workers constituted 48.8 percent of the city's League membership.<sup>98</sup> These changes in social composition were reflected, as well, in the members' level of educational attainment. Over half of the members were categorized as well educated. In other words, most members now had more than the four-year primary education that had characterized the overwhelming majority of the 1917 membership.

The leadership's initial decision to concentrate its limited resources on students stemmed, in part, from the League's difficulties in effecting a merger with the Communist student leagues. The latter had continued their separate existence in the city's secondary (unified labor) schools.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, students made up only 15.4 percent of the city's Komsomol membership in the first weeks of 1920. At the Tenth City Conference the Komsomol specified one of its short-term goals to be "the regulation of relations with another youth organization: the leagues of students within the labor schools."<sup>100</sup>

The degree of Komsomol involvement in the convocation of the Student Conference in early February 1920 remains unclear. Undoubtedly, the Komsomol gained from the conference. A split among the student delegates weakened the autonomy of the student leagues and many members subsequently transferred their allegiance to the Komsomol.<sup>101</sup> One can assume considerable Komsomol input in that process. The student conference marked a turning point for the Komsomol. Though an official merger had taken place between the League and the student associations in the spring of 1919, the partnership had remained fragile. In fact, prior to the February conferences, the Komsomol had done little work among students. As a result of its work among students, within two weeks after the conferences, the Komsomol boasted 120 school collectives with

1,4000 students.<sup>102</sup>

Once the Komsomol consolidated its position vis-à-vis the students, it turned its attention to young workers. A few days after the Student Conference, the Komsomol sponsored the Conference for Non-Party Youth. Students made up a large proportion of the participants. Their numbers reflected the Komsomol's intensified activities in the city's secondary schools. At the Conference for Non-Party Youth the Komsomol launched a strategy of unity between students and young workers. Drebezgov, who headed the Petrograd Committee's school department, summarized the League's position with respect to schools and, indirectly, students. Since the Soviet state was committed to eradicating cultural backwardness and illiteracy among its citizens, Drebezgov argued, the differences that had historically divided students and young workers would soon disappear. The school system would, of necessity, undergo a transformation in which the Komsomol would fulfill the crucial function of eliminating the influence of those students and teachers who rejected Communism. Drebezgov closed his report with an appeal to all students to join their schools' Komsomol cells.<sup>103</sup>

The Conference for Non-Party Youth revived the League's work among factory youths. Prior to the conference, the League launched an agitational campaign that resulted in the creation of new factory collectives.<sup>104</sup> Earlier, in the fall of 1919, the Komsomol Central Committee had advised local organizations to conduct conferences of politically unaffiliated youth, in conjunction with campaigns for the enforcement of the shorter work day and the removal of children from the work force, as forms of obtaining the support of young workers.<sup>105</sup> In Petrograd, economic work, weakened during the critical months of the Civil War, held much promise for the League's membership drive. At the beginning of 1920 an inspection of 300 of the city's enterprises that employed young workers discovered that the majority violated the six-hour day.<sup>106</sup> In keeping with the Central Committee's position and, at the same time, responding to the needs of the young working-class delegates, Vladimir Dunaevskii, the head of the Komsomol's central economic department, pledged the organization's commitment to improve the economic situation and living conditions for young workers.<sup>107</sup>

Thus by the first quarter of 1920, the Petrograd League had established the foundations for extensive work among students and young workers for the rest of the year. Past experience had taught the leadership that the upsurge in activity and growth prior to



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conferences would be short-lived. They now countered that tendency by hosting a "week of inspection," during which the leadership examined and instructed the new collectives. With varying degrees of success, they also established agitational boards both within the Petrograd Committee and the individual district organizations. These measures notwithstanding, many district committees, themselves recently created by the Petrograd Committee, could not provide the energetic guidance and concrete work plans that the new collectives needed. As a result, many of the new units became inactive after the conference.<sup>108</sup>

Weak organization and lack of guidance plagued those working-class districts that had been the backbone of the youth movement in 1917 more so than it did those branches in the city's central districts. Second City district emerged as the fastest growing and strongest of the League's local units. By the end of June, it had 4,579 members, or 23 percent of the city's Komsomol. First City district, with 4,561 members had the second largest membership and the largest number of collectives.<sup>109</sup> None of the working-class districts approached their central city counterparts in numerical strength. Narva, Peterhof, and Petrograd districts had slightly over 2,000 members each. Vyborg, Vasilevskii Island, Volodarskii (formerly Nevskii)-Obukhovskii, and Moscow districts had 1,700, 1,230, 1,381, and 1,300, respectively. The outlying industrial district of Porokhovskoi, an offshoot of Vyborg district, had 460 members. The two central districts had 9,140 members compared to 10,383 members in the industrial districts combined.

In February the League had concentrated its efforts in creating secondary school collectives or base organizations, and, not surprisingly, students became a crucial element of the League's growth.<sup>110</sup> However, by the end of June, school collectives constituted fewer than one-third of the total number of collectives. By contrast, collectives in factories, factory schools (the so-called schools for young workers), and transportation service enterprises comprised 55 percent of all collectives (i.e., 216 of a total 374). Petrograd district, for example, surpassed Second City district in the number of collectives. By May, the Volodarskii district organization had established collectives in all sixteen of the local enterprises. Obukhovskii, its sub-district, had one of the highest levels of participation in factory schools in the city.

The League's Petrograd leadership had reason to be proud. Within half a year after Zinoviev's sharp criticism, it had expanded its

membership more than six times. By the time of its third anniversary in August, the Petrograd League had reached its largest membership since 1917: close to 20,000. This success prompted N. Tatarov to declare that the strategy to widen the League's base had been a success. According to him, almost one-fourth of the city's young workers were rank and file League members.<sup>111</sup>

Tatarov's assessment was overly optimistic. It assumed that all members were young workers. Yet as we discussed above, only slightly over half of all collectives could be considered "working class." The number of secondary school collectives together with those composed of government employees (221) surpassed the number of working-class cells (216). Without concrete figures on the social composition of the district organizations and the collectives, one can only use the collectives as a general guide. It is equally difficult to ascertain the size of individual collectives. Nonetheless, the League's factory collectives were generally small.<sup>112</sup> Most important, the collectives' level of activity must be taken into account when discussing the participation of any one social group. For example, all the small and middle-size collectives in Vasilevskii Island were described as virtually inactive. Indeed, by September Vasilevskii Island was categorized as having one of the most "backward" district organizations.<sup>113</sup> Similarly, Vyborg, the working-class district par excellence, experienced a drop in membership by almost half between July and September.<sup>114</sup> The growth of the League's working-class base, though significant when compared to that of the two previous years, was tenuous at best.

Contrary to Tatarov's assertion, the League's leadership continued to worry over the organization's limited impact on the masses of young workers. Much of the discussion at the Twelfth City Conference focused on the problems facing working class youth, especially homelessness, participation in black market activities, and petty crime. Zlata Lilina, the Party's representative, delivered the keynote address on the League's tasks. On the basis of her report, the delegates to the Conference pledged to involve the League in the establishment of homes and colonies for children and youth, in the school network, and in professional and technical training for young workers.<sup>115</sup>

In the late summer and fall of 1920 the League once again shifted its attention to the revitalization of its working-class base. The sense of urgency that characterized much of the discussion stemmed from the perception of internal and external problems

created by the weakness of the working-class contingent. Lilina had stressed the League's responsibility to ease the difficult conditions that affected working-class youth. The League would need to commit itself to ameliorate the material conditions of all young workers, irrespective of League membership. On the other hand, the League's leadership was only too aware of the critical internal situation facing the organization. Such working-class district branches as Vyborg's collapsed largely as a result of the League's weak economic work.<sup>116</sup> It was felt that, in order to become a powerful organization, the League would have to incorporate all or most young workers into its activities. It would have to defend the interests of all young workers more actively than it had done in the past. Finally, the League would have to expand its educational work through its clubs and, especially, through the popular factory schools or schools for young workers.<sup>117</sup>

Educational and economic activities had served as the core of the League's existence since 1917. The Komsomol leadership understood that both spheres of activity continued to act as magnets, especially for young workers. Therefore, to secure its base, the League would have to develop both types of work. In so doing, the leadership aimed not only at expanding its base, but also, at developing new leaders for the Soviet state and for the League's apparatus from among young workers. Theoretically, by giving the masses of factory youth the tools with which to assert their prominence within the organization, the Komsomol leadership hoped to curtail the encroachment of non-proletarian youth into its governing organs.

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The Third Komsomol Congress, which convened in October 1920, concentrated its attention on the social dynamics that had characterized the League's growth during the Civil War. All delegates agreed that students and white-collar workers had preempted young workers at all levels of the League's leadership.<sup>118</sup> Though a consensus was reached on the need to restore leadership positions to young workers, the delegates also concurred that the League was not an organization exclusively for young workers. Thus they supported Bukharin's position on the necessity for the League to educate all youth, irrespective of class origin.<sup>119</sup> Conversely, they rejected the position of such radical delegates as the Ukrainian Okulik, who suggested accepting young *intelligently* only in exceptional cases.

Like the Petrograd leadership, the majority of the delegates to the Third Congress decided, instead, to focus on the training and education of working-class youth as the means of consolidating their power. Such education would take the form of League courses and, more important, practical work in the main areas of Komsomol activity.<sup>120</sup> Agreeing with Bukharin that the predominance of non-workers in the Komsomol's ruling organs stemmed from the general backwardness of the masses, Shatskin pointed out that this lag manifested itself in the masses' low level of participation in League activities. Indeed, Shatskin blamed young workers themselves for having allowed, through their reproachful inactivity, young intellectuals to have taken over the League's hierarchy.<sup>121</sup> Shatskin called on the League's local leadership to shift the center of action to the factory collectives, and thereby guarantee the preparation of fresh cadres from among working-class youth. This process would also stem the rising tide of bureaucratization that Shatskin ascribed to the leaders' separation from local collectives and the rank and file.<sup>122</sup>

At the national level the Komsomol, like its Petrograd branch, had to face the continued alienation of the masses of young workers from the organization. As a solution, they posited the development of the League's economic and educational work. Yet, as we will see in the next two chapters, the League's economic and educational work was fraught with contradictions and hampered by limitations that restricted the possibilities for creative and spontaneous participation.



## NOTES

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3. William G. Rosenberg and Marilyn B. Young, *Transforming Russia and China: Revolutionary Struggle in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1982), 57.
4. *Ibid.*, 57.
5. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932* (New York, 1984), 7; Fitzpatrick, "The Civil War as a Formative Experience," *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, ed. A. Gleason, P. Kenez, and R. Stites (Bloomington, 1985), 67.
6. Fitzpatrick, *Russian Revolution*, 7. Fitzpatrick does not include intellectuals in her look at the declining proportion of workers within the Party.
7. William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1921*, vol. II (New York, 1957), 190, 251, 254, 257-58.
8. S. Fitzpatrick, "The Civil War as a Formative Experience," 69.
9. Fitzpatrick, *Russian Revolution*, 8.
10. Robert Tucker, "Lenin's Bolshevism as a Culture in the Making," *Bolshevik Culture*, 32-34.
11. Rosenberg and Young, *Transforming Russia and China*, 63.
12. Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge, 1985), 53-62.
13. Fitzpatrick, "The Civil War as a Formative Experience," 73.
14. Rosenberg and Young, *Transforming Russia and China*, 69.
15. *Ibid.*, 66.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, 65-66.
18. Edward H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution* (London, 1950) vol. I, 198-99.
19. Fitzpatrick, *Russian Revolution*, 64-65.
20. *Ibid.*, 64.
21. A. Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia*, 75. Beliaikov gives a more modest figure, 25,000, but this excludes all youths who fought outside Komsomol military detachments. See Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii na front i ikh itogi," *Komsomol'skaia Letopis'*, 1926, no. VI: 157.
22. See Drebezgov's report to the Second Komsomol Congress in Istomol TsK RKSM, Komissiiia po izucheniiu istoriit iunosheskogo dvizhenii v Rossii, *Vtoroi s'ezd RKSM; stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1924), 2d ed., 36.
23. Ivanova and Kletskii, *Slovo o Komsomolii Leningrada*, 63.
24. Tatarov made his claim at a meeting in which Zinoviev, Pozern, and Evdokimov were present; they did not deny this claim. *IUP*, 15 May 1919, no. X: 13; A. Grigoriev, "Piterskaia organizatsiia i grazhdanskaia voina (1917-1920)," *Za piat' let*, ed. M. Udalov and O. Ryvkin (Petrograd, 1920), 34; *IUP*, 1 May 1919, no. IX: 15; *Petrogradskaia Pravda* (hereafter *PP*), 24 April 1919; Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia*, 2.

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Petrograd supplied one-third of the 3,000 Komsomolites mobilized against Kolchak. See Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii," 146; lu. S. Afanas'ev, E. Ia. Remizova, and Z. M. Ivanova, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii VLKSM* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1969), 64.

25. E. D. Stasova, ed., *V kol'tse frontov*, 178.

26. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 67. I. Kankin, M. Aleksandrov, V. Petropavlovskii, and M. Krylov were the Petrograd Komsomol commanders.

27. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 68-69; Grigoriev, "Piterskaia organizatsiia," 36; Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii," 151.

28. Rosenberg and Young, *Transforming Russia and China*, 66.

29. Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii," 151; Stasova, ed., *V kol'tse frontov*, 181, 191; Z. V. Stepanov, *Rabochie Leningrada v period podgotovki i provedeniia oktiabr'skogo voozruzhennogo vosstaniia* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1965), 167; *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 36. See "V Krasnom Pitere," *IUK*, no. XV: 23; "Stranichka," *PP*, 25 November 1919, 4. It is estimated that 30,000 League members joined the Red Army at the national level. See Balashev and Nelepin, *VLKSM za 10 let*, (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1928), 6.

30. Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, 256, 454.

31. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 67; *IUK*, 10 May 1919, no. V: 10; G. Levgur, *Istoriia RKSM; konspekt dlia rukovoditelei kruzhkov i iunosheskikh seksii partshkol* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1923), 28-29; Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii," 144.

32. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 65.

33. *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 22; Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii," 151.

34. *IUK*, 10 May 1919, no. V: 10.

35. For a description of this phenomenon in Vyborg district see N. Fokin, "Kak eto bylo," *Leninskoe pokolenie*, ed., P. F. Kudelli (Leningrad: Priboi, 1926), 68-69. For general accounts see Grigoriev, "Piterskaia organizatsiia," 36; *IUP*, 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 6; *PP*, 5 May 1919, 4.

36. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 76.

37. See Iurovskaia's report to the third plenary session of the Central Committee on 2 August 1920 in *Iunosheskaia Pravda*, 15 August 1920, 2. Beliaikov gives a lower figure: a minimum of 1,500 members volunteered for the Polish front. Beliaikov, "Komsomol'skie mobilizatsii," 152-53.

38. "Ko vsem organizatsiiam RKSM. Ko vsem chlenam soiuz," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 26 April 1920, no. V: 1.

39. *PP*, 29 March 1919, 3.

40. See the district reports presented at the Seventh City Conference (March 28) in *IUP*, 15 April 1919, no. 8: 7-8; 27 March, 2; 3 April, 4.

41. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 76. Petrogradskaia Pravda gave the figure of 800 as the number of members in the organization as of 4 December 1919. See *PP*, 4 December 1919, 2.

42. The figures are for the end of March 1919. *PP*, 29 March 1919, 3; *IUP*, 15 March 1919, no. VI: 14-15 April 1919, no. VIII: 7-8.

43. *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 14; 15 March 1919, no. VI: 14; 15 April 1919: 7-8.

44. *IUP*, 20 October 1919, no. XVI: 13.

45. G. Zinoviev, "Zadachi Soiuz Molodezhi," *IUP*, 1 May 1919, no. IX: 5; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, 48-56.

46. "O rabote na mestakh," *PP*, 17 April 1919, 4.

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47. "Stranichka molodezhi," *PP*, 8 May 1919, 4.
48. *IUP*, 30 August 1919, no. XVI: 13-14.
49. M. Solodnikova, "Rabochii v svete statistiki," *Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii*, IX (1923): 15.
50. This represented under 20 percent of the 1917 work force. See Akademiia Nauk SSSR. Institut istorii, *Ocherki istorii Leningrada*, v. IV (Moscow-Leningrad, 1964), 210. For a higher figure (87,950) see Solodnikova, "Rabochii," 15. She apparently referred to the number of workers at the end of 1920, when the city's industrial output had increased and workers were beginning to return to the work force, if only temporarily. See also O. I. Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia v sotsial'nom sostave fabrichno-zavodskikh rabochikh Leningrada (1917-1928 gg.)," *Istoriia SSSR*, V (1959): 26.
51. Akad. nauk, *Ocherki istorii Leningrada*, v. IV, 210.
52. Solodnikova, "Rabochii," 24. The number of metal workers was 47,000 in 1919 and 34,000 in 1920.
53. Shkaratan, "Izmeneniia," 26.
54. The so-called "prodotriady" consisted of factory workers who went to grain-producing areas to requisition food for the cities.
55. *IUP*, March 1919, no. VI: 14 and 1-15 February 1919, no. III-IV: 12. Other Petrograd Committee district organizers included I. Kankin, D. Petropavlovskii, S. Sobolev, M. Udalov, and E. Karvinen. See Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 61.
56. *IUP*, 29 September 1919, no. XVIII-XIX: 23.
57. Drebezgov was the chairman of the VII and VIII Petrograd Committees.
58. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 61; *IUP*, 15 March 1919, no. VI: 14-15.
59. *PP*, 10 April 1919, 4.
60. *IUP*, 15 March 1919, no. VI: p. 14; 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 14.
61. "Kak byt' bez lektora," *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 9.
62. *PP*, 23 March 1919, 4.
63. *IUP*, 1-15 February 1919, no. III-IV: 5.
64. N. Tatarov, "Po bol'shoi doroge istorii," *IUP*, 4 September 1919, no. XVII: 6; Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 76.
65. N. Fokin, "Kak rabotaiut predstaviteli molodezhi v fabrichno-zavodskikh komitetakh," *IUP*, 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 13.
66. N. Tatarov, "Kak vesti rabotu v soiuz," *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 2-4.
67. *Ibid.*, 4.
68. *IUP*, 15 March 1919, no. VI: 14; 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 14.
69. Aleksei Leont'ev, "Gotovtes' k s"ezdu," *IUP*, 20 August 1919, no. XVI: 2-3.
70. D. [Drebezgov?], "Obedineny li my?," *IUP*, 4 September 1919, no. XVII: 12.
71. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 70.
72. *IUP*, 20 October 1919, no. XXI: 13.
73. The list included such old-timers as Gleron, V. Sorokin, G. Driazgov, Kagan (Tatarov), Faivilovich, Boldyrev, Tuzhilkin, Kornilev, Sovolev, Petropavlovskii, Fokin, and lastrezhenskii. *PP*, 15 October 1919, 2.
74. "Partiinaia stranichka," *PP*, 27 November, 1919, 4.
75. The detachments were broken up on 17 November 1919. See *PP*, 4 December 1919, 2. This disbandment probably served a dual function: it freed League activists from military duties and thereby strengthened the youth organization. From the Party's point of view, the move resulted in a more unified army, free of a potentially divisive, autonomous Komsomol sub-group.

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76. A. Slosman, "Stranichka iunogo proletariia," *PP*, 4 December 1919, 2; 17 December 1919, 2.
77. *Ibid.*, 2.
78. "Stranichka iunogo proletariia," *PP*, 25 November 1919, 4.
79. "Stranichka iunogo proletariia," *PP*, 4 December 1919, 2.
80. This figure was given by Narkomtrud. See "Stranichka iunogo proletariia," *PP*, 9 December 1919, 4.
81. "Stranichka iunogo proletariia," *PP*, 25 November 1919, 4.
82. Slosman, *PP*, 4 December 1919, 2.
83. See S. Sobolev's report in *PP*, 9 December 1919, 4.
84. *Smena*, 15 January 1920, 2.
85. *IUP*, February 1920, no. II-III: 15.
86. Sorokin, *Desiat' let odnogo raiona* (Leningrad: Krasnaia Gazeta, 1927), 11-12.
87. Komsomol historiography glosses over the short-lived Communist Student League, focusing instead on the League's decision to merge with the Komsomol in the spring of 1919. See Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 61; Levgur, *Istoriia RKSM: konspekt dlia rukovoditelei*, 26. This perception was propagated at the time. For example, A. Leont'ev, "Posle mobilizatsii (Nashi blizhashie zadachi)," *IUP*, 15 May 1919, no. X: 2-3.
88. Central Committee resolution on students, *IUP*, 15 May 1919, no. X: 12.
89. Krumin was also the chairman of the Komsomol faction within the Communist Student League.
90. VIII City Conference, 4 July 1919 in *IUP*, no. XIV: 6-8.
91. This distrust appeared in another article that defended selectivity on the basis that those organizations with a preponderance of students showed a propensity to dilute the political content of their work. Pavel Tumbin, "Politicheskaia rabota v KSM," *IUK*, 1 September 1919, no. VIII-IX: 9.
92. For example, see Ia. Benson, "Vsaimootnosheniia rabochei i uchashcheisia molodezhi," *IUP*, 29 September 1919, no. XVIII-XIX: 18.
93. *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 20.
94. *Ibid.*, 18.
95. Fitzpatrick, *Russian Revolution*, 83. See also, Semen Ivanovich Kanatchikov, *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia*, trans. and ed. Reginald E. Zelnik (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 27-28, 105-6; Richard Stites, "Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past," *Bolshevik Culture*, 1, 11, 15.
96. Aleksei Leont'ev, "Blizhe k massam," *IUK*, 15 October 1919, no. XIII: 2.
97. N. Fokin, "Katekhizm iunogo proletariia," *IUP*, 20 November 1919, no. XXI: 4.
98. Those statistics, which were not published until July 1920, divided the membership into four categories: industrial workers (47.7 percent), white-collar workers (33.4 percent), students (15.4 percent), and unemployed (3.5 percent). *IUP*, July 1920, no. VII: 14.
99. See, for example, the advertisement placed by the Student League in *Petrogradskaia Pravda*, 4 November 1919, 2.
100. "10-aia obshchegorodskaia konferentsiia RKSM," *PP*, 6 January 1920, 2.
101. "Iz deatel'nosti soiuza," *PP*, 10 February 1920, 4.
102. Drebezgov, "Krasnye uchashchiisia. Polnym khodom," *PP*, 25 February 1920,



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103. Drebezgov, "Krasnye uchashchiisia. V edinenii--sila," *PP*, 10 February 1920, 2.
104. "10-aia obshchegorodskaiia konferentsiia," *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4.
105. Leont'ev, "Blizhe k massam," *IUK*, 15 October 1919, no. XIII: 2.
106. "10-aia obshchegorodskaiia konferentsiia," 2.
107. *PP*, 7 February 1920, 2.
108. N. Dmitriev, "Iz deiatel'nosti soiuz," *PP*, 10 February 1920, 4; *IUP*, February 1920, no. II-III: 15.
109. Brik, "Peterburgskaia organizatsiia k momentu tret'ei godovshchiny svoego sushchestvovaniia," *IUP*, August 1920, 23. Though we do not have access to district population figures, much less indication of the youth population, the figures above represent the League's membership patterns over time.
110. *PP*, 17 February 1920; 25 February 1920, 2 March 1920.
111. Tatarov, "Nashi udarnye punkty," *IUP*, August 1920, no. VIII: 8.
112. Some examples of memberships of collectives for the late fall of 1920: Treugolnik--150; Putilov--123; Nevskii shipbuilding--83; Simens-Shukkert--60; Trubochnyi--45. See Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 88.
113. *PP*, 22 September 1920.
114. *IUP*, 29 September 1920, 24.
115. *IUP*, July 1920: 15.
116. *IUP*, 29 September 1920, p. 24
117. A. Dorokhov, "Vshir' i vglub'," *IUP*, July 1920, 5, 7.
118. Istmol TsK RLKSM, Komissiia po izucheniu istorii iunosheskogo dvizhenii v Rossii, *Tretii vserossiiskii s'ezd RKSM, 2-10 oktiabria 1920 goda: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1926), 85, 112, 241.
119. *Ibid.*, 124-27.
120. *Ibid.*, 109-10, 125, 129, 245.
121. *Ibid.*, 244.
122. *Ibid.*, 248, 252.

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## Youth Clubs and Schools for Young Workers: The Komsomol's Educational Policy

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*"The enemy is at our doorstep! Our beloved October Revolution is threatened, and with it our unified labor school. Is it possible for us to exchange our present bright, happy school for the previous jail that was the tsarist school? No, this will never be! Students will know how to defend their school."*<sup>1</sup> This youthful call to the defense of the new republic from a group of Communist students underscored the real links between the political revolution and the revolution in education and culture. The Komsomol was at the forefront of both. In the years after October the Komsomol would become identified with the radical transformation of the educational system and cultural life. The Komsomol would inspire and articulate the vision of pro-Soviet teenagers and young adults who saw in the Revolution the possibility to rebel against discipline in the name of a lofty ideal and who welcomed the political change in large measure because, in their mind, it "liberated them from the oppression of adults."<sup>2</sup>

Like economic protection, the education of young workers was a central tenet of the radical youth movement since its origins in 1917. In the summer of that year the pro-Bolshevik SSRM defined itself largely in opposition to the educational and cultural proclivities of its rival and predecessor, Trud i svet. Nonetheless, in its program the SSRM committed itself to raising youth's level of cultural attainment and to developing their class consciousness (see Appendix 3). In fact, the League's program gave priority to consciousness-raising and cultural development over the protection of the economic, political, and legal interests of youth.

After the October Revolution, the new state made education an integral part of its political and social agenda. Fundamentally heirs

of the Enlightenment tradition, Marxists, including Bolsheviks, believed that through education human beings can create a more just and rational society. For the SSRM and, later, for the Komsomol (by definition, political and educational organizations) education had a dual goal: political preparation and the training of a highly qualified work force. The Komsomol's understanding of class consciousness fused political awareness, identified as loyalty for the Bolshevik cause, with broad cultural and social objectives. The new order would be the expression of a strong proletarian culture, based on the principle of active participation in the collective's life.<sup>3</sup>

Nadezhda Krupskaya, who played an active role in the evolving system of universal education, articulated the views of many within the Party and Komsomol leadership who felt that working-class youth, deprived of access to cultural centers under the old regime, lacked the basic tools to create the new proletarian culture. The League assumed responsibility for helping Russian youth, especially young workers, overcome their cultural and educational backwardness.<sup>4</sup> In the early years after the Revolution the Komsomol combined its political work with basic literacy courses, as well as with a diversity of cultural and artistic activities. Immediately after the First Komsomol Congress, the Central Committee reiterated the League's commitment to educational work as one of its primary tasks.<sup>5</sup> The Petrograd organization developed an active educational program both through its network of cultural-educational clubs and through its joint work with Narkompros (the Commissariat of Enlightenment) in establishing and expanding factory schools. To a considerable extent, the Petrograd League owed its revival to its successful educational and cultural activities.<sup>6</sup>

From the point of view of the Party and the Komsomol leadership, the League was primarily an educational organization. As such the organization would be instrumental in the creation of a Socialist society. The Komsomol would participate in what Lenin envisioned as "a long range process of persuasion in the setting of a party led movement of the entire people to socialism."<sup>7</sup> In that process, the League would champion radical change in pedagogical form and content. The Komsomol's passionate campaigns were troublesome at times, since their tenets and methods were often more radical than those favored by Narkompros leaders. But the Komsomol's initiative and independent actions were perceived to be less problematic in the educational realm than they might be in more delicate areas, such as the protection of economic rights.

The Komsomol's involvement in education led it to formulate its particular educational policy during the early months of the Civil War. In turn, this quest to influence the evolving school system and educational priorities involved the Komsomol in a controversy with Narkompros over the most appropriate school system for young workers. The Komsomol's educational work did not lead to the internal schism that the debates over economic work inspired during the same period. Instead, the Komsomol leadership was able to achieve consensus on educational policy. Petrograd served as the geographic locus since that city's organization established the first schools for young workers, the prototypes of the present *fabzavuchi* or factory schools.

### Popular Education: Factory Schools and Youth Clubs

Shortly after the October Revolution, Krupskaja drafted a decree to regulate the education of working adolescents. The proposed decree mandated a shorter work day for teenagers and gave them access to schooling after work hours in employer-funded courses. The decree sought to combine labor with creative, on-site, professional training. It also sought to safeguard youth's health by providing extended summer vacations.<sup>8</sup> These four aspects, all of which had been demands put forth by the organized youth movement since 1917, served as guidelines for the conduct of educational programs for young workers in the first years of Soviet power.

In October 1918 Narkompros decreed mandatory education for all youths between the ages of fifteen and seventeen employed in factories, artisanal shops, commerce, and government services.<sup>9</sup> Using the national decree as its point of departure, the Northern Region Narkompros issued a decree on 15 January 1919 that required all young workers who were unable to attend regular day schools to attend classes for a minimum of two hours per day, six days per week. Employers were required to pay their young employees who attended such courses a full day's wages and were responsible for the verification of school attendance among their young employees.<sup>10</sup> But employers were no longer responsible for funding educational programs, a reflection of the expanding nationalization of industry.

Yet Narkompros lacked the financial and human resources that would have allowed it to incorporate working teenagers into the regular school system.<sup>11</sup> In response to the decree, in the winter of



1918-1919 Narkompros, the trade unions, and the Komsomol developed alternative cultural and educational programs for the city's young workers.<sup>12</sup> They circumvented the widespread violations of the six-hour day by scheduling all such programs in the evening. Three types of educational programs were developed: schools for young workers, school clubs, and youth clubs. These programs were initiated by a group of innovative educators in the extracurricular department of Narkompros; there was little involvement from the Komsomol at their inception in late 1918. But the League began to take an active part in them soon thereafter. Though the functions and goals of the three programs overlapped, important distinctions appeared from the start. The schools for young workers, which met in the late afternoon and evening at the workplace, combined basic education and vocational training. Initially these workers' schools were called school clubs because they offered a program of basic education within the informal club format. In the course of 1919 and 1920 the school clubs evolved into the more structured schools for young workers, which combined participation in production with regular academic courses offered at the factory.<sup>13</sup> The terms *school clubs* and *schools for young workers* were used interchangeably during most of the Civil War to describe factory schools.

By contrast, youth clubs, which were more numerous at first, met outside the workplace. Clubs operated on the basis of informal discussion circles and lecture series under group leaders. The majority of circles were devoted to basic literacy and self-improvement in such subjects as the natural sciences, drama, chorus, orchestra, sports, literature, and crafts.<sup>14</sup> The clubs also sponsored lecture series devoted to political analysis of current events, religion/atheism, socialism, and the youth movement in Russia and the West.<sup>15</sup> Some clubs had small libraries or reading rooms and dining rooms.<sup>16</sup> In response to the continued military crisis, some of the clubs organized military *druzhiny*.<sup>17</sup>

### Schools for Young Workers

In the winter of 1918-1919 Narkompros initiated and funded the first school clubs in Petrograd's factories. These were intended to be temporary facilities that would serve young workers until they were removed from the work force. Thereafter, those students would be placed in the regular school system, which, in Narkompros' estimation, would provide them with a broad, humanistic education

and widen the range of career options before them. Initially, Narkompros did not contemplate the transformation of the school clubs into parallel permanent structures within the regular school system. The Komsomol, on the other hand, embraced the idea of the factory schools as soon as they were created. Not only were the new schools seen as organizational bases for the League, but more idealistically, as "spiritual centers" for young workers.<sup>18</sup>

The first factory schools were established in Spasskii district and at the Obukhov steel mill at the end of 1918. In the following weeks similar schools were founded in the Shlisselburg gunpowder works, at Siemens-Shukert, and in other enterprises in the industrial districts of Vyborg and Narva. By the beginning of January, there were fourteen such schools with nine thousand students.<sup>19</sup> Factory schools emerged in industries that produced for the war effort since a significant number of youths were employed in those industries. The schools had the dual goal of providing a general education to youths employed in production and of inculcating work habits and providing the industrial skills needed for more effective participation in industry. The Northern Region Narkompros developed a program that allowed each school to have its own individual course of study; it allowed innovation but it also required that all students be exposed to the same basic subjects. Factory schools served students ages thirteen to eighteen. Classes met six days per week from six to ten in the evening. In addition to basic education, the factory schools also involved their students in excursions to museums, plays, and concerts. In the summer, factory schools used discussion circles, staged plays and musical performances, or organized sports activities and crafts. The schools also took advantage of the network of Narkompros-sponsored summer colonies in the neighboring rural areas.

Teaching methods varied from school to school. Some preferred the informal circles associated with club work. Others set up teaching laboratories for the sciences and industrial arts. But most of the factory schools in Petrograd, in contrast to those in Moscow and other industrial areas, resembled regular schools in their teaching methods, content, and structure. The school at Porokhovoi Factory, for example, developed a solid program of basic education for its younger teenagers and more specialized courses for older students up to the age of eighteen. The two-year program for younger workers stressed language arts and mathematics. The younger group was required to take other traditional courses, such as geography, history,

natural sciences, drawing, and singing. The only non-traditional courses were conversation and the history of material culture. The program for older students was more technical; it emphasized mathematics, chemistry, physics, mechanics, and various aspects of industrial arts.<sup>20</sup>

The factory school at Porokhovoi was a model, not a typical school club. The shortage of qualified teachers and the lack of material resources circumscribed Narkompros and Komsomol efforts to establish as many factory schools as were needed. Victor Serge, who had just arrived from the West, served as a club instructor in the Petrograd education system. "People were in short supply and I was overwhelmed with work" at a multitude of similar undertakings. "All this brought me a bare existence," remarked Serge, who worked as translator, teacher, and journalist.<sup>21</sup> The student body in the existing schools suffered as much as the instructors, victims of frequent bouts of unemployment and the continuous drain of older youths by the military. Long-term and technically ambitious projects such as the one at Porokhovoi (with its nine-semester course) had to be postponed until the end of the war. As expected, during 1919 and most of 1920 the factory schools provided primarily general education courses.<sup>22</sup>

As the military crisis subsided, the Party, educators, trade unions, and the Komsomol expressed consternation over the quality of technical education available to working-class youth. Beginning in 1920 the Komsomol successfully lobbied for a greater technical content in the factory schools' curriculum.<sup>23</sup> It was at that juncture, two years after the schools' inception, that the League succeeded in promoting them as central institutions in the nation's school system.

### **The Komsomol, Narkompros, and the Factory Schools**

The Komsomol's educational work brought it in closer contact with Narkompros than with any other government agency. In December 1918 Narkompros's extracurricular departments became responsible for financial subsidies to the provincial-level committees of the Komsomol.<sup>24</sup> During the same month, the Komsomol Central Committee participated in meetings where Narkompros worked out a program for the organization of schools for youths.<sup>25</sup> Though the relationship between the League and the Commissariat of Enlightenment was particularly productive during the Civil War years, it was also fraught with tensions that stemmed from two sources: the

Komsomol's attempts to establish its own sphere of activity and its desire to influence educational policy.

The Komsomol's involvement with the factory schools evolved into a real challenge to the pedagogical principles of Narkompros educators and, specifically, resulted in the rejection of the unified labor schools system. Narkompros had great hopes for the unified labor school (*edinaia trudovaia shkola*), the traditional humanistic secondary school inherited from the old regime but reformed in 1918 to combine general education with productive labor. As articulated by Narkompros, labor schools were intended to provide an egalitarian general or polytechnical education for all children, irrespective of social background. Narkompros policies assumed that in the future there would be no class distinctions and no division of labor as it was known in capitalist society.<sup>26</sup> Labor would serve as the point of reference that would make education meaningful to the student. Teachers would use tasks familiar to the student in a given geographic area in order to make abstract concepts accessible. For example, a teacher of a peasant child who was responsible for tending chickens could use that child's experience to teach such basic concepts as zoology, biology, and hygiene.<sup>27</sup> Narkompros educators criticized the practice of many schools that translated the labor component of the new school into assignments of menial tasks such as fetching firewood or running errands. In such cases, it was felt, children learned neither basic subjects nor work skills.<sup>28</sup> They also rejected vocational schools, that historically had limited the young, especially those from the working classes, to specific trades. Narkompros preferred to open the classical school, once the prerogative of the privileged, to all students. Education would then act as the great equalizer and would go beyond training skilled workers to giving all young citizens the capacity to "govern." For these educators, the ultimate goal was to broaden education to sectors previously excluded from humanistic schools so as to nurture the formation of intellectuals from the working class.<sup>29</sup>

Ironically, the Komsomol also sought to create intellectuals from the working class but through a different approach from that pursued by Narkompros. For many Komsomol leaders, Narkompros's policy reflected the "conservative bourgeois" values of the *intelligenty* who staffed that commissariat. As a reaction, the Komsomol developed its own "revolutionary" pedagogical policy, rejecting almost every major point in Narkompros's position. In a basic sense, the Komsomol, which claimed exclusive representation of



youth's interests, felt justified in acting as Narkompros's unofficial overseer. In the long run the Komsomol's constant criticism of Narkompros's educational policy influenced Party leaders' perception of the commissariat's work. Sectors within the Party came to agree with the Komsomol's contention that Narkompros was protecting the interests of the bourgeoisie (meaning non-proletarian social groups) and the non-Communist intelligentsia.<sup>30</sup>

The Komsomol rejected the concept of egalitarianism in education and felt that the Soviet republic should favor the working class in providing access to education, especially at a time when the state could not guarantee equal education for all of the country's youth. Komsomol activists especially objected to Narkompros's incorporation of the old *gimnaziia* into the unified labor school system as the core for the secondary schools. They criticized this proposal on the grounds that the social composition of both the student body and the teaching staff of the secondary schools remained in the hands of the old privileged classes, most of whom continued to be hostile to the Revolution. Moreover, secondary schools stressed a humanistic education, depriving students of access to the skills that the new economic system needed.<sup>31</sup>

At the Seventh City Conference in March 1919 Oskar Ryvkin explained to the delegates how the unified labor schools were not suited for young workers for they lacked strong bonds with the factories. Three months after the factory schools' first appearance, the Komsomol championed them as the base for the future schools, thereby openly rejecting the secondary schools.<sup>32</sup> Ryvkin, Lazar' Shatskin, and other Komsomol leaders felt that Narkompros's reform of the secondary schools was undermined by the "bourgeois" students that made up the student body. Working-class students could not counteract the damage done by their more privileged counterparts because, as a whole, young workers remained outside the schools system. Moreover, the Komsomol viewed the existing pedagogical methods as detrimental to the development of class consciousness of those working-class youth who did attend them. Shatskin explained that usually, "proletarian children who attended bourgeois schools would cut themselves off from their class once they received an education. . . . Torn away from work, they fell into a bourgeois environment and very quickly accepted that spirit and psychology."<sup>33</sup>

The policy was enunciated in Komsomol official documents in the summer and fall of 1919.<sup>34</sup> The League specifically called on Narkompros to transfer its focus of activity away from the secondary

schools and to express its new priorities through reallocation of funds and personnel to the schools for young workers. Komsomol antagonism undermined Narkompros's proposed merger of the two types of schools. For the Komsomol, such a merger would have destroyed the schools for young workers as separate entities and, in effect, the nucleus for the Socialist schools of the future. The only form of cooperation possible was to promote closer ties between the factory schools and the "best elements" (students and staff) from the old schools.<sup>35</sup>

In late 1919 and 1920 the Komsomol concentrated its energies in pressuring Narkompros to create more factory schools. In the process, the League mounted a campaign on behalf of its policy within the Communist party, the trade unions, and the press.<sup>36</sup> The campaign included increased agitation among young workers to support the schools. To speed up the actual process, local Komsomol committees initiated and furnished new schools.<sup>37</sup>

Not only was the Komsomol leadership ensuring the propagation of the controversial schools, it was also guaranteeing a position of power for the youth organization within the schools. The League demanded the right to provide instructors from among its own members. (Presumably these instructors would be Communist students from the hated secondary schools, who would become teachers to young factory workers.) The organization wanted to participate in and supervise the schools' boards. As expected the Komsomol also claimed the exclusive right to organize political work within the schools.<sup>38</sup>

As an integral part of their effort to reform education, the Komsomol also launched a campaign to restructure work. Since their educational policy assumed a continued participation of youth in the work force, they wholeheartedly opposed the law that removed all workers under twenty from the work force. In their battle against the labor protection legislation, which they won in 1920 when they secured an indefinite postponement in the enforcement of the law, they had a formidable ally: Nadezhda Krupskaya. Using the "Critique of the Gotha Program" at the core of her defense, Krupskaya argued that to remove young workers from factory life would be tantamount to depriving them of an understanding of work and the possibility of developing their class consciousness. In turn, this would deprive the country of suitably trained and politically developed workers. She called on Narkomtrud (the Commissariat of Labor) to put an end to the mass dismissals of young workers and, instead, to shorten the work

day for teenagers and to work for the type of education that would be tied to production.<sup>39</sup>

The Komsomol was equally successful in incorporating the factory schools into the regular school system. Though Narkompros did not rescind its support of the secondary school as the main educational facility for Russian teenagers, in 1920 it transferred all activities with young workers from its extracurricular department to the department for the unified labor school system. Within that department it created a board comprised of representatives from the Komsomol Central Committee and from Narkompros's unified labor school, extracurricular, and professional training departments.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Narkompros agreed to a division of tasks with the Komsomol whereby the latter was responsible for all political work among youths in factory schools and regular clubs. Narkompros retained responsibility for cultural and educational subjects within the school clubs with Komsomol input.<sup>41</sup>

In the second half of 1920 the Komsomol widened its campaign on behalf of the factory schools to include demands for the reform of the system of apprenticeship and for the merger of the vocational schools with the factory schools.<sup>42</sup> The vocational schools or *fabzavuch* (factory education) had been introduced that year by Narkompros's department of professional education [Profobra] to meet the need for skilled workers. More trade oriented than the factory schools, the *fabzavuch* was designed to train qualified workers and lower technical personnel. Through a merger of the two types of schools, the League hoped to revitalize the factory schools with an infusion of funds and personnel from Narkompros. At the same time, the youth leadership hoped to supplement the vocational schools' technical courses with the general education program that had been the hallmark of the factory schools. In turn, this would allow the expanded *fabzavuch* to admit younger adolescents, a goal dear to the Komsomol leadership since, up to that point, Narkompros had resisted efforts to provide vocational training for youths under the age of seventeen. To achieve their goal, the Komsomol launched another successful campaign. Under Komsomol pressure, *Glavprofobra* recognized the role of the *fabzavuch* as trainer of skilled, politically conscious workers. At the beginning of the NEP the schools for young workers merged with the *fabzavuchi*. In 1921-1922 a network of *fabzavuchi*, many of them using the original schools for young workers as their base, became widespread in major industrial centers.

The Komsomol secured a victory in the educational sphere

because its position appealed to many sectors of Russian society. With the imminent end to the military crisis, the state faced a need for educated, skilled workers. The Komsomol saw the schools as a means of revitalizing a working class that had been devastated both numerically and qualitatively.<sup>43</sup> The schools offered quick and relatively inexpensive training and, at the same time, guaranteed a pool of politically reliable workers. Moreover, the schools enjoyed great popularity among working-class students and their parents, who saw them as the means of obtaining better jobs and mobility into management or even bureaucratic positions in the state and Party.<sup>44</sup> For many workers, and particularly for youths, factory schools embodied some of the promises of the Revolution: knowledge and the opportunity for self-betterment. This mass appeal explains their rapid growth during the difficult period of 1919-1920. Fourteen schools had been established as of January 1919; by the end of 1920 there were fifty.<sup>45</sup>

For the Komsomol leadership, the schools served many purposes. To begin with, they were ready-made pools of working-class recruits. In such districts as First and Second City, where few enterprises had large concentrations of youths, the schools, which brought together young workers from various shops and offices, provided the League a base for activities.<sup>46</sup> Together with the clubs, the schools brought the Komsomol visibility and popularity: the organization could point to these schools as concrete proof of its commitment to defend the interests of young workers.

The schools filled other less tangible, but crucial needs. To some extent, the Komsomol's school policy reflected the organization's quest for a monopoly of representation of all youth. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Communist student leagues, with their base in the secondary schools, posed a threat to the Komsomol's hegemony. Not coincidentally, the polemic against the unified labor school reached its climax in the spring and summer of 1919, around the time when the official merger of the Communist student leagues and the Komsomol was effected.<sup>47</sup> The Komsomol could now find a political space for those students who identified with the Revolution and, at the same time, eliminate a rival organization. By integrating students into the factory schools, the Komsomol addressed Narkompros's concern over declining academic standards in the non-traditional schools. At the same time, the leadership hoped that daily work and exposure to workers would "proletarianize" bourgeois students. This was an especially sensitive area for a Komsomol



leadership painfully aware of the increasingly disproportionate representation of students in decision-making positions within the League's structure. Thus the Komsomol's rejection of secondary school students was in part an effort by some sectors within the leadership to disassociate themselves from their own non-proletarian backgrounds.<sup>48</sup>

The schools for young workers afforded a creative and concrete channel for youth's rejection of the old schools, traditional institutions and, to a considerable extent, of adult authority. Many League members questioned explicitly the erudite staff of Narkompros, rejecting the notion that pedagogues alone could develop an adequate school system.<sup>49</sup> Their assessment of school teachers was often scathing: they viewed them at best as ignorant and hostile, or worse, as counterrevolutionary. Civil War conditions allowed the League to carve out a space for itself within the country's educational system. The Komsomol's intense involvement in the schools for young workers was decisive in the League's projection and in its ability to have an impact on educational policy. The League's primary educational and cultural work, however, was carried out through its own network of local clubs.

### The Development of Club Work

At its First Congress in 1918, the Komsomol assumed the responsibility for organizing "clubs, reading rooms, and diverse circles" as key instruments of its political and cultural-educational work. By the end of that year eight Komsomol clubs had been established by the district branches in Petrograd.<sup>50</sup> In this early phase, the Komsomol's club work was part of Narkompros's extracurricular program. Since Narkompros concentrated on after-school activities in primary and secondary schools and on special children's clubs, it gave the League considerable autonomy in organizing youth clubs.<sup>51</sup> The League established and administered its own clubs while Narkompros financed them fully.<sup>52</sup>

To some extent the Komsomol's club work duplicated Narkompros's efforts in that area. Yet the Commissariat, plagued with personnel shortages, financial chaos, and a growing demand for clubs, welcomed the League's initiative in expanding the club network. For its part, the League drew a sharp distinction between its own work, which it characterized as innately political, and the work done

by Narkompros, which the Komsomol leadership characterized as largely cultural in orientation. During the course of the Civil War, the Komsomol successfully expanded and systematized its club work and, simultaneously, negotiated a privileged position for itself within Narkompros's extracurricular department.

Clubs had been an integral part of the organized working-class movement. Though not all working-class clubs had a well-defined political orientation, traditionally, political parties and groups had sponsored their own clubs. The organized youth movement established its first club in Vyborg district early in the summer of 1917, during *Trud i svet's* heyday. During the tribulations that the Socialist youth movement experienced in late 1917 and during most of 1918, club work was relegated to the background; but it was not forgotten. The Komsomol was sensitive to youth's demands for a gathering place, cultural and educational activities, and recreation. The League's efforts to address that demand in late 1918 met with popular support. In fact, youth clubs became central to the growth of the district organizations beginning in 1919. The degree of a local organization's success was measured by its ability to provide continuous club activity and by its daily club attendance.

Komsomol clubs worked on a daily basis and were part of the general activities sponsored by the local branches. An urban phenomenon, the clubs geared their work almost exclusively to young workers. This preference for workers was not peculiar to the Komsomol, but reflected the proclivities of many Narkompros employees as well.<sup>53</sup> The Komsomol clubs served primarily teenagers between the ages of fourteen and nineteen, though in early 1919 the League extended the age limit to twenty-three.<sup>54</sup>

As it developed its club work, the Komsomol sought to balance popular demands with its own organizational and political aims. League clubs offered a variety of cultural activities designed to attract a broad public. The League leadership, however, also intended the clubs to attract a pool of potential recruits to the League, serve as theater for practical training of League cadres, and, most important, provide the most basic political training for neighborhood teenagers. In early 1919 the Komsomol Central Committee defined the objectives in its first set of guidelines for club work: to develop the members' class consciousness, to deepen the nascent proletarian culture, to provide a place for rest and relaxation, and to recruit and train Komsomol cadres.<sup>55</sup>

Jurisdictional tensions between Narkompros and the League

emerged with the beginning of close collaboration in setting up schools and clubs. Throughout 1919 the Komsomol and Narkompros were at odds over the political content of club work. The Komsomol leadership believed that Narkompros was pursuing a "strictly cultural line" in its cultural and educational work among youth, paying "no attention to agitation and propaganda."<sup>56</sup> In March 1919 the Komsomol central leadership claimed full sovereignty over all club work and demanded the transfer of all youth clubs away from Narkompros and (to a lesser extent) from the trade unions to the Komsomol:

Only our Communist League, which the Party supports, can carry out the [kind of] Communist work that the various intelligenty from Narkompros cannot do. We must act carefully so as not to destroy the work that has already been started; but [we must] set it right and supplement it. Maybe we will have to let instructors remain, but with the confirmation and under the control of the [Komsomol] district committee or the Komsomol factory cell.<sup>57</sup>

The League's claim to class purity in contrast to the commissariat's vision of a broader consensus remained a source of friction between the two institutions for years to come. Narkompros defined its responsibility as providing education for all young citizens. To do so it courted the teachers from the tsarist schools, despite the fact that the teachers union remained hostile to the Bolsheviks throughout the Civil War. Komsomol activists detested what they perceived to be Narkompros's conciliatory policies. The Komsomol defined its responsibilities more narrowly: the League posited itself as the advocate for the education of young workers and, later, peasants.

The situation was less tense in Petrograd than at the national level. The Petrograd Komsomol had established a productive working relation with the commissariat. By the organization's own admission, the most successful local clubs--those in Petrograd, Vyborg, First City, and Vasilevskii Island districts--all had adult instructors from Narkompros.<sup>58</sup> This experience was generalized by Tatarov when he recommended that all League branches should have adult organizers with club experience to instruct and organize new clubs. The implication was that the League would work closely with club

instructors from Narkompros.<sup>59</sup> At the Central Committee's plenary session in April 1919, the Petrograd delegate stressed the success of the organization's club work and pointed to the close bonds between the city's Komsomol and Narkompros.<sup>60</sup> This same positive assessment was repeated at the Second Komsomol Congress later that year.<sup>61</sup> For its part, Narkompros did not air publicly any major disagreement with the League over club work. The First Congress on Extracurricular Education held in May 1919 adopted a resolution that recognized the important role the Komsomol played in this area and called for closer links between Narkompros and the Komsomol.<sup>62</sup>

In July 1919 the Petrograd Committees of the Communist Party and the Komsomol reached an agreement that concentrated all club work within the Komsomol. In part this reflected the Komsomol's close working relationship with Zlata Lilina, who was both the Party's representative within the Komsomol's Petrograd Committee and a key figure in the city's Narkompros.<sup>63</sup> Admitting that Narkompros lacked sufficient numbers of Socialist teachers to train a new generation of Communists, Lilina called on the League to assume that responsibility. According to her, the League should insist on a political content of its club work and combine its cultural and educational work with the more traditional political circles so popular in the Social Democratic tradition.<sup>64</sup> On the eve of the Second Komsomol Congress Tatarov reiterated the Komsomol's exclusive claim to ideological work among youth:

Only the Komsomol has the responsibility for the entire political-ideological life of young workers and peasants, for promoting class consciousness, for uniting youth around the principles and tactics of the Communist Party.... All cultural and educational work within the Komsomol will be done by clubs existing under local Komsomol organizations, which regulate them and control them.<sup>65</sup>

At the same time, Tatarov insisted that all club work would be led by the most politically developed Komsomol activists or by adults, presumably from Narkompros.

At the Second Congress the Komsomol leadership articulated an even broader understanding of its cultural and educational functions vis-a-vis Narkompros. Not only was the Komsomol solely responsible for the development of political consciousness among young workers



and peasants, it had the task of carrying out general educational work among youth as long as the local government was unable to do so.<sup>66</sup>

In League-sponsored clubs, the Commissariat's role was to provide funds and, at times, club instructors. However, since the Komsomol's role was to conduct political work within all Narkompros clubs as well, the two institutions developed a system for that interaction. Initially, the Petrograd Komsomol established its own sections within the Narkompros clubs at an individual level.<sup>67</sup> In an effort to systematize the relationship between the two bodies, the League decided to take part in Narkompros's central club section. That way, the League's Petrograd Committee, through its cultural-educational department, would guide club work jointly with Narkompros's club section. This step, which coincided with the League's attempts to consolidate its club work at the beginning of 1920, eased some of the tensions between the League and the commissariat.<sup>68</sup> Structurally, the cultural-educational department of the League's Petrograd Committee became a sub-section of youth clubs within Narkompros. It was decided that, thereafter, the Party's Petrograd Committee would appoint the director of Narkompros's club section, while the League's Petrograd Committee would appoint the assistant director. Concurrently, the latter would also serve as director of political education within the League's Petrograd Committee.<sup>69</sup> The agreement was apparently reached at the national level, not just in Petrograd. In effect, Narkompros retained full jurisdiction over cultural and educational subjects while the Komsomol was given jurisdiction over all political work within the clubs. Furthermore, Narkompros also retained jurisdiction over the education of all youths under sixteen years of age while older youths would attend only Komsomol-sponsored clubs. In those areas where the local Narkompros could not provide educational facilities for younger teenagers, the Komsomol assumed that task as well.<sup>70</sup>

### Komsomol Club Life

These major fluctuations in the League's relations to Narkompros were reflected in the growth of the Komsomol's club work throughout 1919 and 1920. Briefly, Komsomol club work began in late 1918-early 1919, reached a high point in the spring of 1919, declined in the summer that year but experienced a definite recovery in the spring of 1920. Club activity reached its turning point in 1920: that

year marked the beginning of uninterrupted, consistent growth. Club work was the League's lifeline during the Civil War. In the organizational revival that began in early 1919, all district branches, with the exceptions of Moscow district and the subdistrict of Rozhdestvenskii, had functioning clubs. Those organizations whose clubs had the largest daily attendance (i.e., First City, Narva, Vyborg, and Vasilevskii Island) also had the largest general Komsomol membership.

The most successful League clubs, in Vyborg and First City districts, conducted primarily educational and cultural activities, despite the theoretical guidelines that intended political education to be the core of all club work.<sup>71</sup> The Petrograd leadership, working closely with Narkompros, stressed the desirability of such activities as theater, music, and excursions; they did not posit political discussions as the predominant form of activity in the clubs. Lectures were not recommended as part of club activities because they were recognized to be tiring.<sup>72</sup> Though the Komsomol addressed the need to prepare Communists, it gave equal emphasis to providing youths the opportunity to participate in their own education (self-improvement) and in helping youth understand the process of creating the new society.<sup>73</sup>

Petrograd's clubs were depicted as models for other Komsomol organizations. They offered a variety of activities, allowing them to attract large numbers of neighborhood youths, and yet retain their political character. Looking at the Vera Slutskaia club on Vasilevskii Island, it is clear that, although political activities played an important role, most of the club time went to other types of circles (see Table 3). Political lectures preempted all other types of activities two days each week; but since the club offered no alternative program on those days it is difficult to identify student preference. While it is true that close to one-quarter of the participants in the club's weekly activities attended the political lectures, the majority of club time was spent on cultural, educational, and sports activities. Without more detailed information on the internal dynamics of the discussion circles, it is not possible to ascertain the degree of politicization of cultural circles. It can be argued that during a period as politically intense as the Civil War such subjects as literature, drama, science, and even chorus could lend themselves to ideological content. Yet, interestingly, the Vasilevskii Island leadership admitted that the organization's political work was particularly weak.<sup>74</sup>

In the spring of 1919 other clubs flourished as well. Such clubs as Iunyi Proletarii (First City district), Spartak (Second City), and Lunacharskii (Vyborg), besides sponsoring a number of activities, also provided concert halls, libraries and reading rooms, and dining facilities. Some even boasted art studios.<sup>75</sup> But educational activities were, of necessity, relegated to the background during much of this period.

**Table 3.**  
**Weekly Activities at the Vera Slutskaiia Komsomol Club**  
**Vasilevskii Island Branch, April 1919**

Type of Activity	Times Per Week	Weekly Number of Participants
Drama	1	46
Chorus	3	156
Sewing	2	47
Orchestra	2	67
Crafts	1	15
Sports	1	60
Political Economy	2	161
Self Education	1	28
Science	1	29
Literature	3	71

Source: *IUP*, 15 April 1919, No. VIII: 7-8, 13.

The instability that characterized Komsomol local work in 1919 proved detrimental to the League's club activities. The spring and summer mobilizations removed half of the district members from the local organizations.<sup>76</sup> By late summer, only Vyborg district reported having a functioning club, and that club's activities were limited to drama, sewing, singing, and games; political discussions were noticeably absent.<sup>77</sup> The deterioration of club work in the second half of 1919 alarmed both the Party and the Komsomol leadership. They subsequently asked clubs to improve their physical appearance, to offer a clean and comfortable place where youth could come to relax (not just participate in some form of circle activity), to provide a reading room with current newspapers, a piano, games such as chess, and eating facilities.<sup>78</sup> Zlata Lilina also called on the League to broaden its club activities by keeping the clubs open all day,

instead of restricting hours to coincide with committee meetings. More important, Lilina called on the League to impart a stronger political character to its work, without sacrificing cultural and educational objectives. In her view, the League had to concentrate its organizational energies on the training of Communist cadres to the new society: "You can give the Communist Party that ideological element of the future society which will be so firm that no enemy shall move it from its place. How is this achieved? By mastering Marxism."<sup>79</sup>

In preparation for the Second Komsomol Congress (1919), Tatarov of the Petrograd Committee worked out a set of theses to guide all future club work. The theses, which were approved as official Komsomol policy by the Second Congress, set the framework for political and cultural-educational work within the League clubs for the rest of the Civil War. The document incorporated the experiences of the previous year of club work and reflected a more precise definition of the Komsomol's ideological role. All club work was to be guided by the recognition that "the Komsomol has the responsibility for the entire political ideological life of young workers and peasants, for promoting class consciousness, for uniting youth around the principles and tactics of the Communist Party."<sup>80</sup> The League pledged to continue providing educational and cultural programs, but political education would be the focal point for all other activities. To be sure, political education would not take up the majority of club time or resources, but participation in a political circle was now mandatory for all club members. Reflecting the long-standing rivalry with Narkompros, the theses called for complete Komsomol control over the cultural and educational work done in all youth clubs. Moreover, the League continued to have full responsibility for conducting educational work in areas where the Commissariat of Enlightenment lacked the resources to do so.<sup>81</sup>

In the period after the Second Congress the League had to reconstruct its network of district clubs. At the beginning of 1920, the district branches held meetings with club instructors and circle leaders to acquaint them with the general tasks of the League's club program. At that point, all clubs were given instructions and club charters.<sup>82</sup> That winter only five districts had functioning clubs and daily attendance in those had declined to low levels.<sup>83</sup> Notably, Vyborg and Vasilevskii Island districts, both of which had successful working-class clubs during the previous year, had no club after the congress. All five existing clubs created political circles, in



accordance with the new regulations.<sup>84</sup> In some districts, this new effort to enhance the political content of club work took the form of a war of principles against club-sponsored dances. An activist from Smolny district explained:

We must struggle against these [dances], not just on paper and with decrees, but we must try to reeducate and interest youth in more reasonable entertainment. We must fight against the proclivity of some members who, waiting for the end of a lecture impatiently, run off to the dance.<sup>85</sup>

Those stricter measures might have enhanced the League's political identity, but club activities remained at a low level in the first four months of 1920. This seems paradoxical, given the League's attempt to expand its popularity among politically unaffiliated youth during the early part of that year. In other words, club work now lagged behind the expansion in general membership rather than serving as a stimulus to growth as it seemed to have done in 1919. Most likely, this reflected the continued drain of youths into the Red Army as well as the clubs' move away from entertainment. Only with the relaxation of the military situation in 1920 was club work revived.

The League stabilized club work in the spring and summer of 1920; at the same time it increased its number of paid political agitators to sixty. These agitators delivered reports and lectures on current topics at club meetings.<sup>86</sup> The Komsomol also developed a cadre of salaried club workers. The League's cultural-educational department worked out a program of short-term courses for club leaders that were coordinated with Narkompros's department of extracurricular education.<sup>87</sup> In 1920 there were 113 such club leaders, over half of whom were young workers, almost half were women, and only a smaller proportion were male students. Ninety-five percent of the group were Party members, an expression of the political importance that club work had gained since the previous fall.<sup>88</sup>

Based on the number of hours and funds relegated to the different types of circle activities, the most popular circles seemed to be those devoted to the arts and humanities. Such circles as political economy and material culture represented less than 10 percent of the total number of hours; about the same proportion of the

funds were expended on club work. By contrast, over 70 percent of all club hours and budget expenditures focused on circle activities in the arts and the humanities.<sup>88</sup> Other changes had become apparent. Though such traditionally popular circle activities as chorus, literature, drama, and sports continued to be popular, the influx of students into the organization introduced new types of circles. For example, the Petrograd district club offered such academically oriented subjects as German, Latin, and art history. In addition to the more common circle activities, the club in Smolny offered astronomy, and one in Moscow district provided rhetoric. This suggests that, though the clubs had become the League's instruments for popular political work, above all they remained popular educational facilities that now had to cater to the needs of the growing number of students in the League's membership.

Their educational and cultural work allowed the clubs to expand. By May 1920 the Komsomol clubs in the Moscow and Second City districts were serving over 1,100 and 2,300 youths, respectively, on a weekly basis. Yet this growth was uneven, since the working-class districts of Vyborg and Vasilevskii Island had not been able to reestablish their clubs. Those two districts provided proportionately high numbers of recruits to the army and were the most severely affected by the war.

The summer of 1920 proved to be a particularly fruitful time for Komsomol clubs. Individual clubs were given access to parks. For example, the club in Second City district was given the use of the Luna Park theater for its summer plays and concerts.<sup>90</sup> The League was given the former yacht club with its full inventory as a working station for League summer activities.<sup>91</sup> These factors allowed the League to reach an unprecedented number of youths in the summer of 1920, when some 35,000 youths participated in Komsomol clubs. Smolny reported weekly attendances of over 1,000 while Moscow district reported serving 700 youths per week.<sup>92</sup>

In the course of two years, the Komsomol succeeded in inserting itself into the country's educational apparatus. It accomplished this by initiating and providing club programs and by asserting its claim to be the exclusive political educator of all youth. By the spring of 1919 Narkompros accepted the Komsomol's critical political role in youth clubs. The following spring Narkompros also agreed to cede a portion of all youth clubs--those designed for older youths--to the Komsomol. Though the actual curriculum for the latter clubs was worked out by Narkompros in conjunction with the League,

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the Komsomol had full control over the clubs' administration and finances. This arrangement still allowed Narkompros to retain decisive control over the program's educational content and to provide instructors for the clubs. That factor, together with the League's successful club work, permitted the two institutions to reach a compromise over club work.

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The development of class consciousness and the creation of "enlightened" citizens--i.e., educated citizens familiar with the arts and literature--were basic goals of the Socialist youth movement since 1917. Significantly, *Trud i svet* understood its educational tasks to include not only the training of generally educated citizens, but the development of persons capable of acting as conscious advocates of their own rights.<sup>93</sup> This vision of self-initiative, though not articulated in the programs of the SSRM and the Komsomol, continued to inspire many members of the youth movement.

While the Komsomol's scope for initiative in the area of economic protection became increasingly circumscribed, the League's educational activities offered enterprising youths room for creativity and for an active role in transforming education. At the same time, the League's educational work provided the organization with a creative solution to the problematic influx of students. Through its factory schools, the League aimed at integrating secondary school students into its work, while exposing them to young workers and, indirectly, to proletarian cultural values.

During a period when the Komsomol, like the Communist party, faced the erosion of its working-class base, its club work and active support for the innovative factory schools afforded the organization the visibility, prestige, and, in part as a result, the organizational base that it needed for continued growth. Club activities and the factory schools attracted significant numbers of potential working class-recruits to the youth organization. Historically, education has become a basic popular demand among the excluded groups of modern societies. As discussed in Chapter 1, working-class youths joined self-help circles and societies or enrolled in evening schools to acquire a basic education and to broaden their cultural horizons. In 1917 this demand found expression in the charter and manifesto of the youth organization, *Trud i svet*.<sup>94</sup> The Communist youth organizations implemented many of the same educational and cultural

programs as their predecessors. All three organizations championed universal education, professional training, cultural and literary activities, and diverse forms of physical education and sports.

In a basic way, the Komsomol's commitment to factory schools and the extension of cultural activities through its network of clubs responded to the desire of young urban workers to gain access to better jobs and to improve the quality of material and cultural life. While the demands of young workers for educational and cultural activities had hitherto gone largely unmet, Komsomol clubs and factory schools helped to fill those needs. Beginning in 1919, however, the Komsomol made it clear that it defined the political education of Russian youth as its primary sphere of activity. The Komsomol perceived itself as a political entity whose main task was to popularize Socialist and radical democratic concepts for the young masses and to recruit and train future cadres for the Komsomol, Party, and government apparatus. It was in its capacity as political educator that the Komsomol was able to exert influence in other spheres that affected youth, most notably in education. Through its work in the country's school system, the Komsomol would become a major institution engaged in molding the worldview of generations to come.

Education also served as the forum for the outpouring of youthful enthusiasm for the new order. Undoubtedly, the Komsomol's most extreme positions at times offended many Party and Narkompros leaders. Nonetheless, Komsomol members were treated with a great deal of tolerance as heirs to the Revolution and future builders of Communism. "If one slogan reported during the Civil War, 'Down with the capitalist tyranny of parents!,' was a bit on the exuberant side for the older Bolsheviks, the spirit of youthful rebellion was generally prized and respected in the party in the early years."<sup>95</sup> This tolerance allowed Komsomol members to express their commitment to a state they identified as progressive and supportive of their own radical agenda. The revolutionary cause was strengthened in the immediate sense, but also in the long run, because the Komsomol was able to express its initiative and creativity in the sphere of education. Radicalism thus served as the basis for consensus from a vocal and active sector of the young generation.<sup>96</sup>



## NOTES

1. "Vremia ne terpit," [Appeal from a Petrograd Communist student union, 21 October 1919] in *V Kol'tse frontov: sbornik dokumentov*, ed. E.D. Stasova (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1963), 184.
2. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (London, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 26.
3. N. Krupskaiia, "Kul'turno-prosvetitel'naia rabota soiuzov rabochei molodezhi," *Iunyi kommunist* (hereafter abbrev. *IUK*), 1 January 1919, no. II: 4; "Zametki," *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 9.
4. Krupskaiia, "Kul'turno-prosv. rabota," 5.
5. L. Shatskin, "Okhrana truda podrostkov," *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 8.
6. *Iunyi proletarii* hereafter abbrev., *IUP*), 1-15 February 1919, no. III-IV: 13; *Petrogradskaia pravda* (hereafter abbrev. *PP*), 5 March 1919, 3 and 6 April 1919; A. Tolmazov, "Sotsialisticheskoe vospitanie i obrazovanie rabochei molodezhi," *Za piat' let*, ed. M. Udalov and O. Ryvkin (Petrograd, 1922), 25.
7. R. Tucker, "Lenin's Bolshevism as a Culture in the Making," *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* ed. a. Gleason, P. Kenez, and R. Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 35-36.
8. N. Krupskaiia, "V Komissariat Truda. (Proekt dekreta)," *Trudovoe vospitanie i politekhnicheskoe obrazovanie*, vol. IV of *Pedagogicheskie sochinenii v desiati tomakh* (Moscow: Izd. Akademii Pedagogicheskikh Nauk SSSR, 1959), 7-8.
9. F. Korolev, *Ocherki po istorii sovetskoi shkoly i pedagogiki, 1917-1920* (Moscow: Izd. Akad. Pedagogicheskikh Nauk, 1958), 387.
10. Reprinted in A. Shokhin, "Bor'ba za sotsialisticheskuiu shkolu rabochei molodezhi," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, September-October 1926, no. I: 165-66. See also, *IUK*, 16 March 1919, 17; *IUP*, 1-15 February 1919, no. III-IV: 15.
11. Fewer than half of all school-age children seventeen and younger attended school during the Civil War. See Korolev, *Ocherki po istorii sov. shkoly*, 387.
12. *IUP*, 1 June 1919, no. XI: 3-4; Tatarov, "Po bol'shoi doroge istorii," *IUP*, 4 September 1919, no. XVII: 5.
13. Andrei Shokhin, "Bor'ba za sots. shkolu," 166.
14. *PP*, 5 March 1919, 6; *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 15; district reports at the Seventh City Conference, in *IUP*, 15 April 1919, no. VIII: 7-8; *PP*, 3 April 1919, 4.
15. *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 14.
16. *IUP*, 15 April 1919, no. VIII: 13; 1 June 1919, no. XI: 3-4.
17. Reports to the Seventh City Conference, in *IUP*, 15 April 1919, no. VIII: 8; *PP*, 3 April 1919, 4.
18. N. Tatarov, "Novyi dukhovnyi tsentr rabochei molodezhi," *IUP*, 1 January 1919, 5.
19. N. Tatarov, "Novyi dukhovnoi tsentr," 6; Iu. S. Afanas'ev, E. Ia. Remizova, and Z. M. Ivanova, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii VLKSM*, (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1969), 61; Shokhin, "Bor'ba," 166. According to Shokhin, 61 percent were male students.
20. Korolev, *Ocherki*, 91, 388, 390. This assertion is corroborated by declarations at the Second Komsomol Congress.
21. Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary, 1901-1941*, trans. P. Sedgwick

(London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 76.

22. The program of study worked out by the Komsomol in 1920 stressed basic education. It included mathematics, science, Russian language, social sciences, art, and physical education. See Shokhin, "Bor'ba," 170.

23. V. Ivanov, "Molodezh' i kvalifitsirovannaia rabochaia sila," *PP*, 10 February 1920, 4; F. Drebezgov, "Rabochaia molodezh' v sovetskom stroitel'stve," *PP*, 25 March 1920, 4.

24. Protocol No. 17, 30 December 1918, *IUK*, 16 March 1919, 11.

25. *IUK*, 15 December 1918, no. I: 10.

26. Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 5, 41-42.

27. N. Krupskaja, "Sochinenie obuchenii s proizvoditel'nom trudom v edinoi trudovoi shkole," *Pedagogicheskie sochineniia*, vol. IV, 24-25. The article was first published in *Narodnoe prosveshchenie* in 1919.

28. Krupskaja, "Sochinenie obuchenii," 23.

29. Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 6, 44; Antonio Gramsci, "On Education," *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1980), 40, 43.

30. Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 12.

31. *Ibid.*, 43.

32. *IUP*, 15 April 1919, 10; *IUK*, 16 March 1919, 13.

33. L. Shatskin, "Trud podrostkov i sotsialisticheskoe vospitanie," *IUK*, 10 May 1919, no. V: 3.

34. *IUK*, 1 August 1919, no. VI-VII: 20; Istomol TsK RKSM, Komissiiia po izucheniu iunosheskogo dvizhenii v Rossii, *Vtoroi s'ezd RKSM: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1924), 74-75.

35. *Vtoroi s'ezd*, 75; O. Skar [Ryvkin], "Proletarskaia molodezh' i shkola 2-i stupeni," *IUK*, 10 January 1920, no. I: 4.

36. Shokhin, "Bor'ba," 169-70. The campaign was explicitly outlined in the theses on school for young workers drafted by Ryvkin and adopted by the second plenary session of the Central Committee in April 1920. See *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 1 May 1920, no. III: 1.

37. "Vasileostrovskii raion," *PP*, 2 June 1920, 4; "Po raionam," *PP*, 27 July 1920, 4 (First City); "Porokhovskoi raion. (Ukomplektovanie shkol rab. mol.)," *PP*, 10 August 1920, 4.

38. Shokhin, "Bor'ba," 170; *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 1 May 1920, no. III: 1.

39. N. K. Krupskaja, "K voprosu ob otmene detskogo truda," *Pedagogicheski sochineniia v desiati t omakh*, vol. IV, 13; Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," *The Marx and Engels Reader*, 2d ed., ed. R. C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 541.

40. Shokhin, "Bor'ba," 170.

41. A. Shlikhter, "K voprosu o politicheskoprosvetitel'noi rabote," *Iunosheskaia Pravda*, 25 April 1920: 3.

42. Shokhin, "Bor'ba," 173; N. Leckhov, "Neotlozhnaia zadacha," *PP*, 11 May 1920, 4.

43. N. Tatarov, "Nashi udarnye punkty," *IUP*, August 1920, no. VIII: 9; F. Drebezgov, "Rabochaia molodezh' v sovetskom stroitel'stve," *PP*, 25 March 1920, 4.

44. Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 44, 63.

45. A. Tolmazov, "Sotsialisticheskoe vospitanie i obrazovanie rabochei molodezhi za piat' let," *Za piat' let*, 25.

46. "Organizatsii molodezhi v gorodskikh raionakh," *IUP*, 4 August 1919, no. XV: 12.

47. Afanas'ev, Remizova, and Ivanova, *Ocherki*, 61.

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48. Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility*, 47.
49. "Otchet shkol'nogo otdela TsK RKSM s 1-ogo maia 1919 do 20 marta 1920," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 6 April 1919, 2.
50. M. Udalov, "Politiko-vospitatel'naia rabota za piat' let," *Za piat' let*, 15. Together with Drebezgov, Udalov headed the Petrograd Committee's club section in 1920.
51. Korolev, *Ocherki*, 333.
52. N. Tatarov, "Po bol'shoi doroge istorii," *IUP*, 4 September 1919, no. 17: 5.
53. N. Krupskaja, "K itogam s"ezda," *Pedagogicheskie sochineniia*, vol. VII, 45.
54. *PP*, 27 March 1919, 2.
55. Efim Tsetlin, "Nashi kluby," *IUK*, 1 January 1919, 4.
56. M. Udalov, "Politiko-vospitatel'naia rabota za piat' let," 17.
57. "Zametki," *IUK*, 16 March 1919, 10-11.
58. *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 14.
59. N. Tatarov, "Kak vesti rabotu v soiuze," *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 3.
60. *IUK*, 1 August 1919, no. VI-VII: 16-17.
61. *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 36.
62. N. Krupskaja, "K itogam s"ezda," *Pedagogicheskie sochinenii*, vol. VII, 41.
63. *IUP*, 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 14; N. Tatarov, "Po bol'shoi doroge istorii," 5.
64. Zlata Lilina, "Pis'mo k molodezhi," *IUP*, 4 August 1919, no. XV: 2.
65. *IUP*, 29 September 1919, no. XVIII-XIX: 23.
66. *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 76-77.
67. See Drebezgov's report on the Petrograd organization at the Second Congress in *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 36.
68. "Iz deiatel'nosti soiuza," *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4; *IUP*, February 1920, no. II-III: 4.
69. Udalov, "Kul'turnaia-prosvetitel'naia rabota za piat' let," 17. Udalov erroneously dates this change to mid-1920, but it had already been reported in the press at the beginning of the year.
70. A. Shlikhter, "K voprosu o politicheskoprosvetitel'noi rabote," *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 25 April 1920, 3.
71. *PP*, 27 March 1919, 2.
72. N. Tatarov, "Kak vesti rabotu v soiuze," *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 3.
73. *PP*, 3 April 1919, 4.
74. *IUP*, 15 April 1919, no. VIII: 7-8, 13.
75. *IUP*, 1 June 1919, no. XI: 4.
76. M. Udalov, "Klub i vospitanie," *IUP*, July 1920, no. VII: 7-8.
77. *IUK*, 1 September 1919, no. VIII-IX: 22; *IUP*, 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 15; *IUP*, 30 August 1919, no. XVI: 13-14.
78. *IUP*, 4 August 1919, no. XV: 11.
79. Zlata Lilina, "Pis'mo k molodezhi," *IUP*, 4 August 1919, no. XV: 2.
80. *IUP*, 29 September 1919, no. XVIII-XIX: 6-8.
81. This last point was added to the original theses as published in *Iunyi proletarii*, at the Second Congress. See *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 77.
82. "Iz deiatel'nosti soiuza," *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4.
83. *PP*, 10 February 1920, 4.
84. *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4; 5 February 1920, 2; 7 February 1920, 2; 25 February 1920, 4; 2 March, 1920, 4.
85. "Khoroshii pochin," *PP*, 25 February 1920, 4.
86. *PP*, 2 June, 1920, 4.
87. Udalov, "Politiko-vospitatel'naia rabota," 19.

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88. Ibid., 18.

89. Ibid.

90. *PP*, 18 May 1920, 4.

91. A. Dorokhov, "Na letnee polozenie," *PP*, 20 April 1920, 3; Udalov, "Politiko-vospitatel'naia rabota," 17.

92. *PP*, 19 August 1920, 4.

93. See Goal 1 in *Trud i svet's* Charter, Appendix 1.

94. See Goals 1 and 2 of *Trud i svet's* Charter and Points 1 through 10 in *Trud i svet's* Manifesto, Appendix 1.

95. S. Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 78-9.

96. Peter Kenez depicts the Komsomol as one of the Communist organizations which effectively carried out propaganda and elicited popular support for the Bolshevik cause. It was precisely this kind of support that determined the outcome of the Civil War in favor of the Bolsheviks. However, he views the Komsomol as a "pseudovoluntary" organization of young people who, in the process of agitating for the Bolsheviks, convinced themselves of the validity of their slogans. I would inverse this logic and argue that the revolutionary cause was helped precisely because young Communists were allowed initiative and room for action especially in the military and in education. See Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5-7, 84-85.





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## Labor Advocacy: The League Debates Economic Work

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The economic demands of young workers kindled the organizational drive that culminated in the creation of *Trud i svet* in the spring of 1917. Organized youth pressured the workers' movement to incorporate such issues as wage parity, youth representation in factory committees, the removal of children from the work force, and the six-hour day for adolescents. In the summer of 1917 the organized youth movement was swept by that radical wave that impelled major sectors of Petrograd's working class to discard the course of action proposed by the moderate socialist parties in favor of the Bolshevik line. The redefinition of the youth movement and concomitant founding of the SSRM reflected the growing radicalization of *Trud i svet*'s membership. It expressed, as well, the desire among the rank and file for a clearer articulation of the movement's economic goals and demands.

Economic demands, central to the movement's inception and definition, continued to be vital to the youth organization in the period after the October Revolution and throughout the Civil War. During that time the Komsomol leadership sought to define the content of League work at the factory level to conform to the new political and economic realities. The leadership also attempted to delineate the organization's function in the process of policy-making at the state level and in the enforcement of labor laws affecting youth. The Komsomol's attempt to demarcate its sphere of action created tensions between the Komsomol on the one hand and the trade unions and the Labor Commissariat [*Narkomtrud*] on the other.

Economic work also generated internal tensions within the organization as it forced the Komsomol leadership to reevaluate the

role that economic work was to play in relation to the organization's general activities. Would economic work be central to the Komsomol's *raison d'être*? In the context of a diminishing working-class following, this question was a particularly thorny one. Should the League foster economic work, in particular labor protection activities, as a means of replenishing its working-class base? If so, how much autonomy would those economic activities be given within the organization and what implications, if any, would they have for the League's political identity? Beginning in the spring of 1919 the Komsomol leadership split as it grappled with these issues.

### **The Enforcement of Labor Protection Laws and Komsomol Economic Policy**

A few days after the October Revolution the Commissariat of Labor mandated the six-hour work day for all workers under eighteen years of age, the removal of minors under sixteen from the work force, effective 1 January 1919, and the removal of adolescents under the age of twenty as of 1 January 1920.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, this timetable had not been met, even in the large cities; Lazar' Shatskin, in charge of economic work in the Komsomol Central Committee in 1919, concluded that, as a whole, the situation for young workers had remained unchanged since the spring of 1917.<sup>2</sup>

Violations of the labor protection acts for young workers remained a main concern for the Komsomol throughout the Civil War. Shatskin ascribed the nationwide non-compliance with the decrees protecting young workers to the technical difficulties associated with the shorter work day. Fearing a further drop in productivity, factory committees impeded the enforcement of the decree on the shorter work day for minors.<sup>3</sup> Many factory committee members argued that there was no sense in releasing their young workers two hours earlier for the purpose of sending them to school when, in fact, there were no schools to take them. In artisanal shops, where the level of trade union and Komsomol organizing was lower than in large factories, the exploitative use of minors now reached its highest levels since October 1917. (The word "exploitation" was frequently used in a vague sense by youth activists involved in labor protection.)

The situation surrounding the total ban on child labor was just as complex. Shatskin admitted that even if the factory

administration and committees had been willing to release children under fourteen from the work force, conditions were such that their dismissal would be a financial burden to them and their families. He argued that in order to dismiss such minors from their factories in a socially responsible manner, the government would have to establish dormitories and dining rooms to care for those minors who were homeless. The state would also have to help those families who depended on their children's earnings to supplement household income. Finally, reflecting the Komsomol's identification with the economic goals of the Soviet state, Shatskin suggested that the removal of those minors might be detrimental to those industries that depended almost exclusively on child labor, for instance, the textile industry.<sup>4</sup>

Gradually, the Komsomol leadership, both at the Central Committee level and in Petrograd, outlined its policy on the removal of children under fourteen (*maloletnie*) from industry and on labor protection of youth in general. By the spring of 1919, Shatskin argued that the release of children was not an isolated goal, but, rather, a crucial aspect of the construction of communism. To build communism, a new type of person must emerge: knowledgeable and class conscious. To develop such citizens, society must provide young workers with schools linked to production and a system of education that could give its students a scientific understanding of labor. Therefore, the reform of child and youth labor would be meaningless unless it was accompanied by the reform of the entire school system. The Komsomol would henceforth tie economic work to school reform. In order to attend school, children and young workers had to be released from the work force.

But to free young workers before society could guarantee the necessary schools would result in such social problems as street life and juvenile delinquency. The Revolution witnessed the rise of a youthful street culture that nurtured juvenile crime. The social upheaval that began with the massive pre-war peasant migrations to industrial centers and that was magnified by the Civil War disrupted family life. Masses of children and teenagers were orphaned and others were separated from their families for a variety of reasons. Some, a minority, broke with their parents over ideological fights. Abandoned, displaced, or otherwise on their own, these minors, who tended to come from the working class or the peasantry, inhabited the streets of Russia's towns and cities. On their own, many banded together into criminal gangs that engaged in burglaries, assaults, contraband trade, and smuggling. Too often, these young vagrants,



known as *besprizorniki*, knew firsthand the agonies of prostitution, alcoholism, and drug addiction. Juvenile crime, on the rise since the beginning of the century, reached unmanageable levels during the Civil War and the NEP. The Komsomol, like the libertarian educators in Narkompros, opposed treating young offenders as adult criminals. They favored rehabilitation programs that provided housing, food, vocational training, and a general education rather than punitive confinement. The Komsomol leadership also adopted the realistic position that dismissals of young workers from their factories before society could provide educational programs would only push them into the bands of *besprizorniki*.<sup>5</sup>

Beginning in the early months of 1919 the Petrograd Komsomol leadership mounted a campaign against the blanket enforcement of the removal of minors from the work force. The February issue of *lunyi proletarii* lauded the decision of the department of labor protection to ask trade unions and factory committees to suspend the enforcement and cease the mass dismissals of minors. The department of labor protection also asked the factory committees to rehire all those youths who had already been dismissed, while at the same time stressing that no additional youths should be hired.<sup>6</sup> In July, Tatarov termed the removal of all young workers under twenty years of age an incorrect policy. Instead, he favored the shortening of the work day to allow all such young workers to attend school. In this battle, the Komsomol recruited the help of Krupskaya, who concurred on the inadvisability of dismissing young workers.

The decrees on labor protection notwithstanding, young workers continued to experience unequal treatment at work. In the textile works of Vyborg district, factory committees and administrators discriminated against teenagers, refusing to hire them because they resented paying a full day's wages for six hours of work and interpreted it as preferential treatment for the younger generation.<sup>7</sup> Many adult workers felt that the educational benefits from the arrangement would not compensate for the loss in working hours and decreased output. This attitude persisted throughout this period.<sup>8</sup> Nikolai Fokin, the reliable and committed Vyborg activist, asserted that in almost all the factories in which the Petrograd Komsomol had collectives, they encountered resistance, particularly to their request for full powers within the factory committees. They were not given equality with adult factory committee members, despite the fact that youth activists performed the same tasks as adult activists.<sup>9</sup> Without a voice in the factory committees and other

organs, young workers could not advance their demands. Not surprisingly, by September 1919 the Petrograd organization confirmed that only four hundred of over a thousand factories employing large numbers of youths had implemented the six-hour day.<sup>10</sup>

Officially, however, the Komsomol leadership seemed blind to this lack of solidarity and even resistance on the part of adult workers, stressing, instead, the Komsomol's willingness to work in harmony with state agencies, especially Narkomtrud, and the trade unions.<sup>11</sup> Through the Komsomol, young workers would seek representation in the factory committees, trade unions, and Narkomtrud. At the end of 1918 the Komsomol Central Committee obtained representation in Narkomtrud's department of labor protection at the national and local levels.<sup>12</sup> By the beginning of 1919 the Komsomol leadership defined its realm in the economic sphere as monitoring the enforcement of government legislation by participating in factory committees and government agencies.

The First Petrograd Regional Congress [February 1919] defined economic tasks to include: the enforcement of the six-hour day and a further reduction of the work day for workers under the age of twenty to four hours, a greater number of Komsomol representatives in Narkomtrud, the improvement of living conditions for young workers through the establishment of dormitories, and the social protection of young workers.<sup>13</sup> In March the Central Committee added to the above list of priorities the establishment of factory schools and the League's investigation of working conditions.<sup>14</sup> These priorities remained constant for the rest of the Civil War. Yet not all sectors within the League's leadership accepted the economic program adopted by the majority in the Komsomol's Central Committee. As the Komsomol leadership defined the parameters of independent action in economic work, it split into factions, particularly at the municipal and provincial levels. Though all sectors agreed that young workers must be integrated into the process of labor protection, the form of that participation became a source of internal tension.

One group of leaders stressed the particularities of young workers, arguing that young workers were in a more vulnerable position than other sectors of the working class. They concluded that it was essential for young workers to "undertake the protection of their own interests."<sup>15</sup> They accepted the Central Committee's earlier pronouncements that protection would be carried out through representation in state organs and the trade unions, but they

perceived the Komsomol's role to include, as well, the functions of a lobbying body. This sector thus advocated a more active economic role for the League. They favored full representation in the factory committees and Narkomtrud. Such an activist role augured problems with other workers' institutions since tensions continued to exist between League factory activists and adult factory committee leaders.

The Komsomol Central Committee, more moderate in its position on economic work, decided in early 1919 that the advisory vote in factory committees and Narkomtrud would be sufficient to allow the League to carry out its tasks. To insist on separate, full voting powers within those bodies, argued Shatskin for the majority, would violate the principle of representation in both bodies. In theory, factory committees represented all workers in a given enterprise. Similarly, Narkomtrud, which was made up exclusively of representatives from the trade union councils, encompassed all union members, irrespective of gender or age.<sup>16</sup> Shatskin's argument rationalized a fait accompli: at the end of 1919 the Ministry of Labor gave the Komsomol only a consultative vote, while the factory committees in general resisted demands for separate youth representation.

Differing with their more moderate comrades, the critics of the Central Committee asserted that youth constituted a distinct interest group within the working class, at times in actual conflict with adult workers. Therefore, young workers required their own instrument of power within organized labor and the workers' state. This vision of youth as a separate group within its own class, which had been part of the radical youth movement since its inception in the spring of 1917, had been tacitly rejected by the authors of the first Komsomol program (see Appendix 4). A few months after the First Congress, this sense of separateness would resurface at the core of the organizational alternatives proposed by those activists who sought to expand the Komsomol's working-class base and to make the organization an advocate for the economic rights of young workers. In the process, that faction challenged the League's ability to represent and lead the young working masses in the entire country.

## Labor Protection and the Komsomol: A Debate

Interrelated factions questioned the Komsomol's capacity to become a true mass organization and ascribed the League's difficulties in recruiting young workers to its weak economic work. These difficulties led to the youth leadership's growing isolation from the working class. The most popular of these factions advocated the creation of a political organ, the youth soviets or councils, at the local level as well as youth sections within the Soviet of Workers' Deputies at the national level. The same disaffected sectors of the Komsomol leadership also proposed the creation of an economic organ in the form of a network of youth sections within the trade unions. Concomitantly, it appears that the Urals organization continued to support the Homes for Proletarian Youths that the First Congress had rejected. This latter faction apparently remained a local phenomenon limited to the Urals, and, though it might have had some connection with the first faction, it was less important in the nationwide debate.

The concepts of trade union sections and youth soviets have been attributed to the Moscow activist, Vladimir Dunaevskii. Unquestionably, Dunaevskii played a pivotal role in the controversy; but to ascribe the dispute to one of its spokesmen is to distort a complex and popular movement. The idea of youth soviets had been espoused by the Moscow League activist S. Gimel'farb at the end of 1918; soon thereafter he became the secretary of the Moscow Committee. In an analysis of the disintegration of the Petrograd League, Gimel'farb concluded that only economic and cultural-educational work among the masses of young workers would save the organization from total collapse. To do this mass work, Gimel'farb proposed the creation of local soviets of young workers and the establishment of a youth section within the Soviet of Deputies.<sup>17</sup> Gimel'farb did not propose an organ to carry out economic work at the work place. Yet other Komsomol leaders had begun to seek an instrument through which the League could enforce labor protection at the factory level.

Already in December 1918, the editors of the journal *Iunyi kommunist* deplored the propensity of the Moscow leagues to do only club work at the expense of factory work:

The link with the factories has been broken and the organization is losing its proletarian character. League



activists must not forget that the factory youth collective is the basic cell of our organization. . . . Only the factory collective can protect youth's interests on the spot, by pointing out all violations of the decrees on working minors and by sending its representatives to the factory committees. . . . Only when young workers are organized in factory collectives shall we be able to say that our League is not built on sand and will we rest assured that at our first call all young workers will support and fulfill all the League's activities and decisions.<sup>18</sup>

Though it is true that during 1919 the Moscow organization's working-class membership grew at a slower rate than that of the Petrograd League, that organization also faced serious problems with respect to its working-class following.<sup>19</sup>

From the spring of 1919 through 1920 the Petrograd League felt the pressure to expand its working-class membership. The League's inability to do so prevented it, according to Zinoviev, from carrying out the political functions that the state needed during that critical period. However, while Zinoviev and other Party leaders expressed their concern for the practical political implications of the League's relatively small working-class cadre, they did not link the problem of recruiting young workers to the organization's economic work per se.

The Muscovite Vladimir Dunaevskii was not the youth soviets' only champion, perhaps not even their originator; but he became their most articulate exponent. Dunaevskii and other opposition leaders believed that the new state needed to expand its influence over all workers, including youth; therefore, the Komsomol needed to discard the outlived tradition of small circles of Communists and sympathizers and develop, instead, a true mass organization, the soviets.<sup>20</sup> The Komsomol, Dunaevskii affirmed, would continue to function as the ideological leader of those youths organized in soviets. In relation to the soviets, the League would be "the organized thinking nucleus that guides the movement along a Communist channel."<sup>21</sup> Economic work, long neglected by the League, would serve as the basis for the soviets' existence.

In Dunaevskii's view, the young masses would be attracted to the youth soviets because those bodies would give them the means to protect their own economic interests, a task that adult workers could

not fulfill. "As a stratum of the working class, young workers are in a well-known antagonistic relationship to adult workers."<sup>22</sup> Only by founding their own soviets, the most successful instruments of struggle that the working class had created, would youth protect their interests. Dunaevskii called on the Komsomol to support the creation of the youth soviets and, in so doing, encourage young workers to develop independent action in their political and economic life. Concurrently, Komsomol participation in the soviets would ensure Communist influence over the entire youth movement.

While Dunaevskii expounded his theory of the youth soviets in the pages of *Iunyi kommunist*, in practice he waged an agitational campaign to create youth sections within the trade unions. As a member of the Moscow Committee's economic-legal commission (established in April 1919), Dunaevskii took an active part in creating district-level economic commissions. The commissions investigated violations of the decrees protecting working minors. From that experience, Dunaevskii and other members of the economic-legal commission concluded that, in order to involve young workers in the defense of their own interests, they would have to rely, above all, on young trade union members.<sup>23</sup> Through their participation in the trade unions' departments of labor protection, youths in all phases of production would secure the six-hour day, the prohibition of night shifts and dangerous work for minors, and the end to the exploitation of children by parents and other adults in the home crafts industries.

The concept of youth sections in the unions enjoyed considerable support from other local youth activists. In the spring of 1919 Dunaevskii defended the youth sections before the Central Council of Trade Unions, presenting them as a Komsomol proposal.<sup>24</sup> Though the members of the Central Council acknowledged the importance of incorporating youths into the trade unions, they resisted the idea of separate youth sections. Perceiving an attempt on the part of organized labor to shelve the issue of youth sections, other members of the Komsomol economic-legal commission took their cause to the rank and file. The young workers of Basmannyi, Zamoskvorechie, and other Moscow districts passed resolutions that confirmed the overwhelming support for the youth sections in the capital and in other industrial centers. According to N. Zander, who acted as the sections' advocate at the second plenary session of the Central Committee in the summer of 1919, the sections had received the initial backing of the Latvian, Belorussian, and Kursk organizations, and subsequently became the subject of discussion

throughout the country.<sup>25</sup>

But from the perspective of some Komsomol leaders, youth soviets and youth sections in the trade unions posed a threat to the Komsomol's position in relation to the trade unions and the Party. Could the Komsomol continue to be recognized as the exclusive representative body for all youth while introducing divisive issues that could not carry much favor in trade union and in some Party circles? Understanding the quicksand on which the opposition had placed the entire Komsomol organization, the dominant faction within the youth leadership sought to combat the divisive movement in the early summer of 1919. To begin with, the defenders charged that Dunaevskii had underestimated the Komsomol's membership at the national level in proportion to the number of young workers in the entire country. According to Dunaevskii, there were over one million young workers in the work force, but only 20,000 Komsomol members for the entire country.<sup>26</sup> But the majority claimed that Komsomol membership had climbed to 60,000 that summer.<sup>27</sup> Clearly, even the higher figure was miniscule and the majority was forced to admit that the Komsomol had failed to become a workers' mass organization.<sup>28</sup> Instead, the majority stressed the organization's potential mass following. Ironically, the Petrograd organization was held up as a model mass organization despite the criticism that had been leveled at that city organization for its inadequate work with the masses of young workers.<sup>29</sup>

The opponents of the youth sections and youth soviets took Dunaevskii and Zander to task for implying that the political nature of the League's activities and, specifically, its close ties with the Communist party, impeded its growth.<sup>30</sup> The reasons for the limited popular participation in the Komsomol rested, instead, in the general situation of the working class. Youth lacked a tradition of organization and this prevented them from uniting for common action.<sup>31</sup> On a cynical note, Lazar' Shatskin argued before the second plenary session that, normally, the masses become active only in specific revolutionary moments. The same "historical law" applied to all organizations; therefore young people could not be expected to diverge from that law by joining organizations in masses. This was aimed, no doubt, at those activists who yearned to recapture the level of activism manifest in 1917. Shatskin's message was clear: any attempt to create new organizations, such as the soviets or youth sections, was bound to yield the same low levels of activity that plagued the Komsomol at that moment.<sup>32</sup> There was nothing terribly

wrong with the Komsomol, nothing to change. Moreover, by going against the historical laws, those who championed the creation of new organizations would deplete the Komsomol since their efforts would appeal to the same small pool of activists, many of whom would shift their energies from the League to the youth sections or soviets.<sup>33</sup>

Their protestations aside, the majority had to come to terms with the inadequacy of the League's economic work and, like their critics, recognize that the League needed to address this issue in order to enhance its popular appeal.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the majority conceded that the League had to revise its admission policies and strive to maintain an open door to young workers and peasants.<sup>35</sup> But rather than support the creation of trade union sections and youth soviets, the Central Committee majority favored activating the Komsomol's central and local economic-legal commissions. Acknowledging the validity of the opposition's major points, Oskar Ryvkin criticized the creeping bureaucratization among the leaders and their separation from the base. Ryvkin agreed that the organization needed to develop new styles of agitational work.<sup>36</sup> Ironically, the proposed commissions constituted bureaucratic forms rather than forums for mass participation.

During the debate, the majority, whose most vocal spokesmen were Ryvkin and Shatskin, conceded that the League's relations with adult workers were problematic. Ryvkin felt that the League received no practical help from adults in the Party and the government; instead, those bodies continuously drained the League of activists, using them for their own needs.<sup>37</sup> Shatskin went a step further in accepting that adult workers resisted the economic demands of young workers; the trade unions and government organs refused to recognize the Komsomol as the defender of the economic rights of young workers.<sup>38</sup> But the majority refrained from stressing their differences with Party and trade union activists along generational lines. According to Ryvkin, the Petrograd experience had shown that the attitude of adults would improve dramatically once the League began to do successful social work.<sup>39</sup> Above all, Ryvkin contended that resistance on the part of adults could not be equated with class conflict. This, which became the majority's position, was most eloquently expressed by Lazar' Shatskin.

Shatskin did not deny Dunaevskii's and Zander's contention that youth had special interests that at times conflicted with the interests of adult workers. Yet, Shatskin argued, common class



interests must be given priority over particular interests. Youth needed an organization, the Komsomol, to help them protect their interests. The League's advocacy could not be carried out in opposition to the rest of the working class but in collaboration with it.<sup>40</sup> What, then, did Shatskin see as the Komsomol's economic tasks? First, the organization must assist the working class, through its government organs, in enforcing legislation on labor protection. Second, the Komsomol must educate both adult and young workers as to the state's goals concerning working minors. Only the government would have the responsibility for initiating measures to protect young workers. This made any instrument of struggle, such as the youth soviets or trade union sections, superfluous. To insist that only youth could protect its own interests would be tantamount to youth syndicalism.<sup>41</sup>

By the summer of 1919 there were indications of compromise on both sides of the polemic. Both Zander and Dunaevskii insisted that the Komsomol should retain its leadership over the mass organizations and that the trade union sections would be transitory forms.

### Economic Issues at the Second Komsomol Congress

The tentative conciliation reached in the summer of 1919 was undone by the time the Second Komsomol Congress convened in the fall. Though both camps reduced the Komsomol's basic economic role to that of assisting the government in the enforcement of the decrees protecting young workers, they parted company over the relationship of young workers to the working class in general. As expected, Ryvkin and the Central Committee majority focused on the need for unity within the working class.<sup>42</sup> According to this line of reasoning, the organized youth movement could not continue to act as an instrument of economic struggle as it had done in bourgeois society. The workers' state acted on behalf of the entire working class; therefore the League could not carry out its economic work independent of the state and other workers' organizations.<sup>43</sup>

In the opinion of Dunaevskii and his supporters, on the other hand, the enforcement of the decrees protecting young workers called for active participation of all prospective beneficiaries. Pointing to the difficulties that Moscow's Labor Inspector encountered in the enforcement of legislation protecting minors, and to the opposition of

factory committees to specific provisions of the decrees on young workers, Dunaevskii put forth separatist views that clashed with those of his comrades within the Central Committee.<sup>44</sup>

The dichotomy expressed by the opposing sides represented two major strands present in the youth movement since its inception in 1917. On the one hand, there were those activists who had much faith in the spontaneous, albeit guided, efforts of the masses. The majority, on the other hand, spoke for sectors that preferred an institutional approach to organizing, a preference voiced in the charter of the SSRM in the summer of 1917. The conflicting visions that each group had of the relationship between young workers and their class led to differences on the organizational forms that they proposed as instruments for the League's economic work.

The Central Committee majority proposed a complex structure that included Komsomol representation in the Departments of Labor Protection and Social Welfare, a system of economic-legal commissions, trade union cells for youths employed in artisanal shops, the training of youth assistants in the Labor Inspectorate, and, at the base, a network of Komsomol factory collectives. The economic-legal commissions, which would operate within the Komsomol Central Committee and in the provincial and city committees, were intended to act as the League's central economic organ. Consisting of representatives from Komsomol factory collectives and trade union cells, the commissions were seen as links between the Komsomol leadership and the masses of young workers. As organs of labor protection the economic commissions would develop cadres of field workers who would go to the homes of young workers to determine their financial need prior to their removal from the work force. In addition, the commission's field workers would gather information on the employment of youth in hazardous occupations, wages, and working conditions in general. The commissions would be responsible, as well, for promoting trade union organizing among young workers employed in small shops. Significantly, the commissions would have no power to correct violations of the decrees on labor protection. As internal bodies within the Komsomol organizational structure, the commissions would have no links with government organs in charge of labor protection.

In part to guarantee the Komsomol a voice in the process of labor protection at the state level and to satisfy those League members, primarily at the base, who were pressuring the leadership

to adopt a more decisive economic policy, the Komsomol Central Committee sponsored the creation of a youth labor inspectorate. The proposal, which enjoyed Narkomtrud's approval, advocated the training of young assistants at the Labor Inspectorate. These assistants would specialize in investigating violations of the legislation governing the employment of youth. Like the members of the economic-legal commissions, the assistants were to be elected by the Komsomol factory collectives and trade union cells, thereby maintaining ties with the League's rank and file by rendering periodic reports to conferences of factory collectives and to delegates' meetings.<sup>45</sup>

Except for the youth assistants' closer ties to the Labor Inspectorate, there was no clear distinction in the functions and composition of the youth labor inspectorate and the economic-legal commissions. The scope of action of the two bodies was not defined by the Second Congress. Structurally, the commissions lacked the means to implement policy while the autonomy of the young assistants was restricted by the fact that, though elected by their respective collectives, their appointment was subject to confirmation by the trade unions.<sup>46</sup> This conformed with the Komsomol's official position that youth would not seek to assert its autonomy in relation to the working class, but would cooperate with other workers' organizations. In return, the Komsomol would gain recognition as a legitimate entity in its dealings with the Labor Inspectorate and the trade unions. A more significant shortcoming in the Central Committee's economic plan, however, stemmed from the dependence of both the proposed commissions and the youth inspectorate on the Komsomol factory collectives, the League's weakest internal units, for their cadres. To strengthen its political and economic work, the League would have to rely on a stronger basic unit than the factory cells, which according to Dunaevskii and the opposition could only be the youth sections within the trade unions.<sup>47</sup> The majority of young workers were employed in big industry. By limiting League work to sections in those trade unions that organized artisanal workers, Dunaevskii argued, the Komsomol had excluded the majority of young workers from its economic and political work.<sup>48</sup>

Dunaevskii asked the Komsomol to give priority to economic work and express that commitment by immediately transferring its best activists to the economic-legal commissions. The Muscovite activist articulated a radical vision of the Revolution with its faith in participatory democracy and in the liberation of people from

traditional bonds of oppression. He saw the problems that youth faced and their expectations as part of the unattained goals of the Revolution. Indicative of his radicalism and the all-encompassing nature of his critique, he included in those unfulfilled goals not only the unmet demands of youth but also other aspirations of the radical revolutionary movement in general, such as the end to individual households and to the family's educational function in society.<sup>49</sup> From the premise of mass participation, Dunaevskii and the opposition went on to reject the restrictive confines set up by the Central Committee majority. League cells, even if established in most factories, would be, necessarily, exclusive bodies, limited to those youths who actively supported the Bolshevik party. Instead, the opposition aimed at involving all young workers in the defense of their economic rights.

The opposition stressed the need for good relations with the trade unions so as to establish, with their cooperation, the broadest network of youth sections within the unions. The sections would carry out labor protection, negotiate fair wages, and fight for better working conditions for young workers employed in small shops. In the process, the sections would serve as practical schools that would teach young workers the principles of the trade union movement. The opposition envisioned a broad mass movement over which the Komsomol would exercise its political guidance through the establishment of cells within the trade union sections. This was a dilemma parallel to that facing the Petrograd leadership: should the League expand its membership or should it retain a smaller following over which the leadership could exert more direct guidance and control. For Dunaevskii, it was more important to effect mass mobilization specifically on the basis of economic interests. For the dominant sector within the Komsomol leadership, on the other hand, it was imperative to secure control and hegemony over a more politically defined movement.

Dunaevskii's proposed sections were defeated at the Second Congress. The majority position received thirty-six votes as opposed to twelve votes in favor of Dunaevskii's position and twelve abstentions.<sup>50</sup> The congress did not discuss the potential that economic work had for recruitment of more members because of the majority's reluctance to use economic issues in its quest to expand its following. Yet the controversial trade union sections had enjoyed much support and the notion of some form of youth presence in the trade unions could not be rejected outright. For that reason the



leadership approved the creation of Komsomol factions within the trade unions, a compromise designed to guarantee the Komsomol's presence through a more manageable vehicle than the youth sections.<sup>51</sup> Unlike the Komsomol factions proposed by the majority, the sections would have been open to all young trade union members, irrespective of affiliation with the Komsomol. In fact, the Komsomol leadership was reluctant to organize all young trade union members, probably because it felt it would have very limited influence over a mass movement outside the League's organizational structure.

Dunaevskii and his supporters had proposed a mass movement based on generational and economic demands. Such a movement, if successful, would have opened a Pandora's box at a time when, in the opinion of the leadership, the Soviet state needed solidarity and unity, at the height of the worst fighting during the war. The Komsomol could expect neither state-owned nor private industry to provide young workers with full pay for a shorter work day, given the collapse of the economy. Similarly, though adult hostility to the efforts of the organized youth movement had existed throughout the revolutionary and Civil War period, emphasis of this sentiment at a time of crisis would have been perceived as divisive.

### Economic Work After the Second Congress

The Second Congress left two major aspects of the League's economic work unresolved: the value of economic work for the recruitment of new League members and the problem of adult resistance to the economic demands of young workers. Both aspects had been at the heart of the proposals presented by the opposition. As a sign of the relative strength that the dissidents held within the League, Dunaevskii became the head of economic work. Though Dunaevskii mollified his criticism of the majority, even defending the general line approved by the body, he still expressed a more activist vision of the Komsomol's role than was comfortable for other Komsomol leaders.<sup>52</sup> While Dunaevskii praised the government's achievements in protecting young laborers, he felt that was not the most important legacy of the October Revolution. Rather, the Revolution had given youth the capacity to advocate the improvement of their own conditions.<sup>53</sup> Dunaevskii emphasized initiative.

Mass participation in economic work remained an objective for many Komsomol leaders after the congress. In December 1919

Vladimir Ivanov, in charge of economic work within the Petrograd Committee, voiced this position when he launched the slogan: "Through mass participation, young workers themselves must carry out the work of labor protection!"<sup>54</sup> According to Ivanov, only the mass participation of young workers in the League's economic work would prevent the bureaucratization of the Labor Inspectorate. But to Ivanov and others, including Dunaevskii, such participation would have to be channeled through government agencies or the trade unions.

The League launched its economic work in December 1919 when the newly elected Komsomol Central Committee held its first plenary session with members from provincial committees.<sup>55</sup> The provincial delegates stressed the need for a central economic-legal department within the League whose main function would be to promote the codification of labor protection for working minors.<sup>56</sup> The local leadership was particularly concerned with the issue of food allotments for working minors under the age of eighteen and with the material conditions of young workers in general. During the Civil War the government resorted to paying wages in kind. Unable to collect taxes, the new state printed paper money that grew increasingly worthless. As a result, it was obliged to provide workers with at least a meager food ration, and with shoes and clothing. Apparently, young workers were not getting food and clothing allotments on the same level as adults.

After the first plenary session the League's economic demands would include living and working conditions, food, and housing.<sup>57</sup> A new aspect had been added to the concept of labor protection: the physical well-being of the labor force included housing and food. In the new formulation, factory collectives were responsible for solving such immediate problems as housing, the establishment of dining facilities for youths, and the improvement of sanitary conditions in dwellings. Within the evolving Komsomol machinery, the economic-legal commissions would direct and unify the work of the factory collectives.<sup>58</sup> The economic-legal commissions were charged with the responsibility of creating Komsomol cells within the trade unions.<sup>59</sup>

The League intended to give much power to the recently created office of assistant to the labor inspector. In theory, the assistants to the labor inspectors integrated the masses of young workers into the practical tasks of labor protection and information-gathering, and in so doing, served as links between the central organs and the young masses.<sup>60</sup> They helped the labor inspectors enforce the protection of

minors in the work force, a task that the local inspectors could not carry out effectively because of strained resources. The assistants were League members, elected at delegates' meetings of the factory collectives. The total number and the distribution of young assistants were determined by a special decision of Narkomtrud and the Department of Social Welfare. The assistants, who performed their duties under the direct supervision of the local labor inspector, had no administrative functions and could not act independently in cases of violations of the labor protection decrees. An assistant could only report infractions to the particular labor inspector under whom he or she worked. Further, the labor inspector had the right to request the replacement of any assistant without explanation to the Komsomol leadership. Despite these limitations, the creation of the office of young assistants represented a gain for the Komsomol. Only the League, through its local cells, could give youth a voice in the country's economic life; it was the sole youth organization given the right of representation in economic and other state agencies.<sup>61</sup> In the summer of 1920 schools for assistants to the labor inspectorate were created for the purpose of training new cadres and consolidating the office of young assistants.<sup>62</sup>

Shortly after the Second Congress the League reached a series of agreements with various government departments, especially with Narkomtrud. The most important of these was the decree on youth assistants discussed above. The League was also granted representation on the boards of labor protection within the local Soviets. For its part, the League agreed to support Narkomtrud's request that young workers employed in the defense industry work an additional two hours per day. No doubt this retreat from League policy was unpopular with young workers in general and with the League rank and file.<sup>63</sup>

The Komsomol also became actively involved with the Commissariat of Health (Narkomzdrav) on aspects of hygiene and sanitation. Chronic malnutrition and endless exposure to cold dwellings and work places weakened the population's resistance to such communicable diseases as typhus, typhoid fever, influenza, and cholera. In Petrograd's unheated apartment houses, plumbing burst and was left in disrepair, forcing tenants to live in unsanitary conditions that were aggravated by the voluntary crowding of large numbers of people into single rooms, where they shared the dwindling supply of firewood and fuel. The mobility of the Civil War years allowed masses of civilians and soldiers to spread contagious

diseases, including venereal diseases, and the typhus-infested body lice throughout the country. Over one million Russians contracted typhus and, of those, close to 10 percent died. Under the Commissar of Health, N. A. Semashko, the government concentrated its scant resources in preventive medicine, especially in programs of hygiene and public health instruction. Komsomol cells integrated themselves into the work of Narkomzdrav's cleaning commissions fighting epidemic diseases. Within the commissions, they inspected baths and other public facilities for cleanliness and educated the population on basic principles of hygiene and the spread of disease. Together with representatives from the trade unions and Zhenotdel (the women's department within the Communist party), the Komsomol participated in Narkomzdrav's courses on the prevention of venereal diseases.<sup>64</sup>

The League demanded that the Supreme Economic Council [VSNKh] train more specialists from among young workers and requested input in the training of future managers and cadres. Similarly, the Komsomol began to work out a program with Narkompros to restructure apprenticeships, organize workers' faculties, and secure admission of League members to schools of higher technology. The League also reached an agreement with Narkompros to develop courses on labor history for youths. The League also participated in the system of food distribution together with the Food Commissar. These activities no doubt reflected and enhanced the growing prestige of the Komsomol.<sup>65</sup>

Particularly important were the agreements the League reached with the trade unions. In the months after the Second Congress, the Conference of Trade Union Secretaries granted the Komsomol the right to create and unite youth groups within the trade unions and to have exclusive influence over them. They also approved clothing allotments for young workers and wage increases for apprentices. By the summer of 1920 a plan for the regulation of wages for young workers guaranteed eight hours' pay for the four- and six-hour work days. In its efforts to remove youths from hazardous occupations, the Komsomol obtained the cooperation of such industries as tobacco processing and mining, that compiled lists of occupations deemed unhealthy or otherwise inappropriate for young workers. The Komsomol secured the right to send apprentices to trade union boards and factory committees, where they were given specific duties as part of their practical training in trade union work.<sup>66</sup>

Yet, how effective was the youth inspection or, for that matter, the Komsomol's participation in government departments and in trade



union boards in its efforts to defend the economic interests of its youthful constituency? Above all, the Komsomol had to define what its role would be in the period of economic reconstruction that began as the Civil War came to an end. Indeed, most of the Komsomol's pronouncements in the year after the Second Congress dealt with the urgent economic needs of the Soviet republic. Given the desperate conditions, to what extent would the Komsomol act as the defender of the economic rights of young workers? Specifically, what steps could the Komsomol take with respect to violations of the labor protection laws? What would be the nature of Komsomol relations with the trade unions? What would the organization's position be with respect to the continued resistance of adult workers to League activities in the realms of labor protection and organization building? Young assistants to the labor inspector were successful in uncovering the continued employment of minors under the age of fourteen. But while the assistants concentrated their efforts primarily on the release of children from the work force, other economic problems continued to plague young workers.<sup>67</sup>

The Komsomol's quest for a post-war economic program echoed the discussions that rocked the Party and trade unions in late 1919 and throughout 1920. The country faced an economy ruined by six years of world and civil war. By 1920 key industries, such as iron, coal, steel, and oil, were producing at a fraction of their pre-war level. Transportation had come to a virtual standstill. White and Red armies had destroyed tracts of precious farmland. What would be the priorities of the workers' state in this period of economic reconstruction? What would be the role of the trade unions in that process and what would be their relationship to the state?

In December 1919 Trotsky introduced the controversial policy of the militarization of labor. The War Commissar, lauded for his successes in creating the Red Army, advocated state control over a militarized, bureaucratized economy. His plan called for mandatory labor as the means to reconstitute the labor force necessary to bring about economic recovery. Given the fact that there were no material incentives, Trotsky felt compulsion was the best way to bring back the many workers who had gone to rural areas to flee urban hunger or who simply found the black market more lucrative than the factory. Trotsky's plan also called for the merging of the trade unions with the state. According to this vision, the trade unions must help the state in eliciting self-discipline and self-sacrifice from labor and teach workers to put the interests of production above their own needs and

demands. He hoped to infuse the trade unions with a sense of discipline, vitality and organization that they lacked but that was at the core of the Red Army.<sup>68</sup>

Naturally, such a position was bound to evoke the ire of many trade unionists. In fact, the trade union leadership split and some actually supported the state-oriented, "productionist" vision espoused by Trotsky and later modified by Lenin and the Central Committee's majority. However, those who opposed the militarization of labor waged an impressive campaign that gained momentum in 1920 and became the impetus behind the rise of the Workers' Opposition. The so-called "consumptionists" (to use Deutscher's term) held that the trade unions must defend the workers' claims to a greater share of the Revolution's benefits. They wanted greater equality in the wage scales, and free education, medicine, housing, food, shoes, and clothing for all workers. Soon the movement extended its critique beyond Trotsky's regimented concepts of labor and the economy to an all-encompassing challenge to the state's priorities. The Workers' Opposition wanted to give the trade unions greater economic powers and control over management. They believed that the influence of the working class was decreasing in relation to the power of other social classes. Related to this point, they felt that the Party's links to the working class had been eroded in the course of the war. They called for greater democracy within the Party, more industrial workers in government and in management, greater autonomy for the trade unions and for local Party committees, and the uprooting of the insidious bureaucracy that had sprung up at all levels of society.<sup>69</sup>

Trotsky's position found supporters among some Komsomol leaders. For example, at the beginning of 1920 the Petrograd activist, N. Tatarov, outlined the League's tasks in the period of economic recovery and included the notion of militarized labor. As the Red Army was transformed into a labor army, Tatarov called on youth, who made up the majority of soldiers, to give the Party their undivided support in "the construction of a socialist economy." He felt that the League should create collectives within the labor army to explain to the soldiers, most of whom were young peasants, the political significance of the new economy. Above all, Tatarov stressed the need for labor discipline. The League now called on the young generation to give its best cadres to the country's economic reconstruction to the same extent that it had given of itself during the armed conflict.<sup>70</sup>

In a departure from an earlier emphasis on labor protection,

youths were now asked to serve as models, inspiring all other workers with their enthusiasm and discipline. They were also asked to make sacrifices and, in the name of higher levels of productivity, to give up such hard-fought benefits as the shorter work day.<sup>71</sup> Those youth collectives that had accepted the eight-hour day voluntarily were praised for their revolutionary dedication.<sup>72</sup>

This redefinition of economic goals created dissension within the Komsomol. In particular, the extension of the work day to eight hours, not always attained voluntarily, was a major source of controversy in the course of 1920.<sup>73</sup> At the second plenary session of the Central Committee, which met in April, Dunaevskii called for an end to the practice of extending the work day, by then a widespread phenomenon. The ensuing discussion generated the most heated debate of the session.<sup>74</sup> Like Dunaevskii, other leaders felt that the emphasis should be placed on raising productivity within the shorter work day mandated for youth.<sup>75</sup> Significantly, Tatarov, who had earlier called for self-discipline, and who supported the inclusion of young workers in labor conscriptions, publicly opposed the longer work day. He was forced to acknowledge that, without the six- and four-hour work days, the League's educational tasks, of supreme importance for the training of working-class specialists, would be impossible.<sup>76</sup>

The Komsomol's emphasis on the country's economic reconstruction was the corollary of its commitment to the Communist party and the Soviet state. Yet officially the Komsomol was also the defender of the economic, cultural, legal, and political interests of youth. The vision of the Komsomol as an economic advocate had supporters in the rank and file and in the leadership.<sup>77</sup> Shortly after the Second Congress, Dunaevskii told a delegates' meeting in Moscow that the time had come to give young workers that for which the Revolution had been fought. Inspired by the ideals championed by the Workers' Opposition, Dunaevskii demanded Komsomol input in the actual protection of young workers, but also food, decent housing, and health care.<sup>78</sup>

Dunaevskii voiced a growing sentiment among workers, especially those active in trade unions, who clamored for improvements in working and living conditions. As the Civil War ground to an end, the working class, weary of the sacrifices it made during the crisis, began to demand a relaxation of the policies imposed by War Communism. In the course of 1920, as this current gained momentum, the Komsomol, like the trade unions, split into

"productionist" and "consumptionist" factions. The revolutionary idealism of the Workers' Opposition and of Dunaevskii and his supporters, though largely unrealizable in the conditions of scarcity that confronted the country, found support with rank and file trade union, Party, and Komsomol members, who came primarily from the working class.<sup>79</sup>

At the conference for non-Party youths held in Petrograd at the beginning of 1920, Dunaevskii defined general areas in which the Komsomol should concentrate its economic work. Once again he stressed the importance of the institutes of young assistants in helping pertinent government organs to enforce labor protection laws.<sup>80</sup> Earlier, in December, the Petrograd Committee had sponsored a week of inspection to determine the situation of young workers in the city's factories.<sup>81</sup> As a result of this effort, in which over 150 members participated, the Petrograd leadership determined that in the majority of cases young workers were putting in a full eight-hour day, and yet received the lowest wages and suffered from poor sanitary and living conditions.

Dunaevskii also set the tone for the work on housing and food allotments. Communal homes and dormitories were established for young workers throughout the Civil War period as a means of removing them from unsanitary and unhealthy living quarters.<sup>82</sup> In the summer, this campaign was extended to include sending young workers with health problems to colonies outside the urban areas. As least on paper, the League insisted that working minors be given preference in the scheduling of vacations.<sup>83</sup> Teenagers under eighteen received special food rations and the Komsomol was able to establish some control over dining room facilities for minors.<sup>84</sup> In late 1919 Dunaevskii also called for a medical inspection of young factory workers that, though delayed throughout most of the country, was carried out in Moscow.<sup>85</sup> Finally, throughout 1920, the Komsomol continued to participate in cleaning campaigns and other efforts to contain epidemic diseases.<sup>86</sup>

The Komsomol focused much attention on the training of specialists and qualified workers as one of the primary economic tasks in the period of reconstruction. At the beginning of the year Dunaevskii and V. Ivanov called for Komsomol control of factory apprenticeship.<sup>87</sup> "Our organization should take an active part in the process of integrating youths in the training of qualified workers," declared Ivanov.<sup>88</sup> During 1920 the Komsomol had a voice in trade union decisions concerning the structure of apprenticeship and wages



for apprentices.<sup>89</sup>

The Komsomol also expressed concern for the retraining of those youths involved in black market activities and in petty crime. The organization assumed the position that youths caught in such conditions should not be tried as adult criminals, but should be offered education in some craft or profession.<sup>90</sup>

These gains notwithstanding, the Komsomol still encountered resistance and even hostility from many adult workers. In general, factory committees paid little attention to young workers.<sup>91</sup> According to a survey done by the Petrograd organization at the beginning of 1920, even Party collectives gave little active support to the League's efforts to organize and to conduct economic and political-educational work among youth. At times during 1920 the Komsomol asked the Party to pressure factory committees and the local labor departments and trade unions to cooperate with the League's economic work.<sup>92</sup> On the brighter side, efforts to improve the economic situation of young workers, such as the week of inspection sponsored by the Petrograd Committee, brought a degree of visibility and respect to the League from among both young and adult workers.<sup>93</sup>

Overall, the Petrograd Komsomol carried out a successful economic program in 1920 thanks to the energy of its activists and to Dunaevskii, now the head of economic work at the national level. Beginning in December 1919 the Petrograd League attacked what it saw as the most pressing problem facing young workers: mass unemployment caused by the fuel crisis. Despite initial resistance from government agencies and the trade unions, the Petrograd leadership successfully defended the position that no young worker should be dismissed from work without permission from the commission for the removal of minors, and declared that the League would fight the mass dismissals that were throwing young workers out on the streets and into the black market.<sup>94</sup> In so doing, the Petrograd League took a more active line than that adopted by the delegates to the Second National Congress. Dunaevskii and his supporters in Petrograd (e.g., V. Ivanov and P. Smorodin) and other cities brought a degree of economic activism previously missing from League work.<sup>95</sup>

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By the spring of 1920 other sectors of the Komsomol leadership voiced what eventually became the dominant position on economic work. According to them, the League had concentrated an inordinate amount of resources on economic work. In the opinion of the Muscovite Gimel'farb, at this point a spokesman for the dominant group, Dunaevskii and his supporters were turning the Komsomol into a sort of trade union for young workers. "Since Soviet power will give [young workers] as much as it can, there is no one from whom youth's interests must be protected at this point."<sup>96</sup> The only objective remaining for the League's economic work was to attract the greatest number of youths to communism.

This renewed attack on Dunaevskii's position seemed unwarranted. To begin with, the theses for economic work that Dunaevskii presented at the spring plenary of the Central Committee were concerned primarily with the Komsomol's responsibilities and tasks in the nation's economic recovery. Of a total of eighteen points, only four points dealt with the protection of youth's economic interests. Of those four points, three were demands for professional training and general education. The only controversial aspect of the theses involved the opposition to a longer work day. Dunaevskii's theses were adopted by an overwhelming majority of the delegates at the session, reflecting the support that he enjoyed among the provincial and local Komsomol leadership.

Beyond their activist vision of economic work, Dunaevskii and his supporters had mounted a real challenge to the Komsomol's organizational form, to that external and internal structure that the Bolshevik youth movement had adopted in its first two years of existence. It is for this challenge that Dunaevskii has come to be known in Soviet and American historiography.<sup>97</sup> And indeed his contemporaries confined the analysis of the opposition to this particular aspect of the controversy. In fact, as we shall see in the final chapter, the polemic around economic work evolved into a reconsideration of the Komsomol's economic and educational functions and of its relationship to the state and to the Communist party.

## NOTES

1. L. Shatskin, "Trud podrostkov i sotsialisticheskoe vospitanie," *Iunyi kommunist* (hereafter abbrev. *IUK*), 10 May 1919, no. V: 2.
2. L. Shatskin, "Okhrana truda podrostkov," *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 3-4.
3. *Petrogradskaia pravda*, (hereafter abbrev. *PP*), 5 February 1919, 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 4.
5. V. Dunaevskii, "Bor'ba s melkoi spekulatsiei i prestupnost'iu molodezhi," *IUK*, no. VI-VII: 9-10; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1935), vol. II, 341; V. Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 98; Peter H. Juville, "Contradictions of Revolution: Juvenile Crime and Rehabilitation," *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, ed. A. Gleason, P. Kenez, and R. Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 261-78.
6. *Iunyi proletarii* (hereafter abbrev. *IUP*), 1 February 1919, no. III-IV: 15. By the end of 1918 the trade unions and Narkomtrud decided not to enforce the ban on the hiring of youths aged fifteen and under scheduled for 1 January 1919. See Shatskin, "Okhrana truda podrostkov," 4.
7. *IUP*, 1 June 1919, no. XI: 13.
8. P. P-ov [Petr Petrov], "Vpechatlenie na zavode," *IUP*, 1 February 1919, no. III-IV: 3.
9. N. Fokin, "Kak rabotaiut predstaviteli molodezhi v fabrichno-zavodskikh komitetakh," *IUP*, 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 13.
10. N. Tatarov, "Po bol'shoi doroge istorii," *IUP*, 4 September 1919, no. 17: 6. This contradicts an earlier statement in the article "Zashchita ekonomicheskikh interesov," *IUP*, 1 March 1919, no. V: 4, to the effect that almost all Petrograd factories had complied with the enforcement of the six-hour day. Given the fact that Tatarov's article served as a pre-congressional report on the status of the Petrograd organization, it would seem that, if anything, his figures might have erred on the side of moderation.
11. Shatskin, "Okhrana truda podrostkov," 4.
12. *IUK*, 15 December 1918, no. I: 10; Central Committee Report, *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 10. The League also received the right to send a representative to the department of social welfare.
13. *PP*, 5 February 1919, 2.
14. Central Committee decisions, *IUK*, 16 March 1919, 13.
15. N. Tatarov, "Obedinenie trudiashcheisia molodezhi Severa," *IUP*, 1-15 February 1919, no. III-IV: 3.
16. Shatskin, "Okhrana truda podrostkov," 4.
17. Gimel'farb, "Neobkhodimaia forma organizatsii rabochei molodezhi," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, September-October 1926, no. I: 144-46.
18. "Zametki," *IUK*, 15 December 1918, no. I: 9.
19. See the district reports for Moscow in *IUK*, 2 January 1919, no. II: 13-14; Ryvkin's report to the VII City Conference in *IUP*, 5 April 1919, no. VIII: 8; local reports in *IUK*, 1 August 1919, no. VI-VII: 16.
20. V. Dunaevskii, "K voprosu o sozdanii soveto rabochei molodezhi," *IUK*, 10 May 1919, no. V: 4.
21. *Ibid.*

22. Ibid., 5.

23. Dunaevskii's co-workers remain anonymous in the historiography of the period.

24. V. Dunaevskii, "Rabota ekonomicheskoi-pravovoi komissii," *IUK*, 10 May 1919, no. V: 14.

25. By the summer of 1919 support for the sections had spread to Kaluga, Tula, Moscow province, and Brobuisk. See Istomol TsK RLKSM, Komissiiia po istorii iunosheskogo dvizheniia v Rossii, *Vtoroi s"ezd: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1924), 141; "Mozhet li VLKSM byt' massovoi organizatsiei? (Stenograficheskii otchet o diskussii, sostoiavsheisia posle II plenuma TsK 1-ogo sozyva," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, September-October 1926, no. I: 118-23. The adherents of the trade union sections were concentrated primarily in the greater Moscow area, the Western provinces, and the Ukraine.

26. V. Dunaevskii, "K voprosu o sozdanii sovetov," 5.

27. Aleksei Leontiev, "Nuzhny li sovery rabochei molodezhi?" *IUP*, 1 June 1919, no. XI: 4; L. Shatskin, "O sovetakh rabochei molodezhi," *IUK*, 1 August 1919, no. VI-VII: 5.

28. However, at the second plenary session the activists Kuznetsov and Petrov insisted that the Komsomol was a mass organization already. See "Mozhet li VLKSM," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. I: 134-35.

29. N. Tatarov, "O formakh iunosheskogo dvizheniia," *IUP*, 1 August 1919, no. XV: 4; L. Shatskin, "O sovetakh rabochei molodezhi," *IUK*, 1 August 1919, no. VI-VII: 4-6.

30. L. Shatskin, "O sovetakh," 5; N. Tatarov, "O formakh," 4.

31. Shatskin's speech at the second plenary session in "Mozhet li VLKSM," p. 131; Leontiev, "Nuzhny li sovery," 5.

32. "Mozhet li VLKSM," 130-31.

33. A. Leontiev, "Nuzhny li sovery," 5; Shatskin, "Eshche o sovetakh rabochei molodezhi," *IUK*, 1 September 1919, no. VIII-IX: 8; also, Kolesnikov's comments at the second plenary session in "Mozhet li VLKSM," 127.

34. Tatarov, "O formakh," 4; see Petrov's, Dalin's, and Shatskin's comments in "Mozhet li VLKSM," 124-25, 128-29, 132; Resolution of the second plenary session, *IUK*, 1 September 1919, no. VIII-IX: 18; "Gotovtes' k s"ezdu," *IUK*, 1 September 1919, no. VIII-IX: 2; A. Leontiev, "Zadachi vtorogo vsrossiiskogo s"ezda," *IUK*, 10 September 1919, no. X: 3; Kolesnikov's speech in "Mozhet li VLKSM," 127.

35. Leontiev, "Nuzhny li," 5; Resolution of second plenary, 18; Central Committee letter to all local organizations, *IUK*, 1 August 1919, no. VI-VII: 20.

36. "Mozhet li VLKSM," 138.

37. Ibid., 136. For a similar assessment see N. Fokin, "Kak rabotaiut predstaviteli molodezhi v fabrichno-zavodskikh komitetakh," *IUP*, 15 July 1919, no. XIV: 13.

38. Shatskin, "O sovetakh," 4; Fokin, "Kak rabotaiut," 13; Shatskin, "Eshche o sovetakh," 7.

39. In Petrograd's case, "social" tasks meant Komsomol involvement in the military mobilizations. See Ryvkin "Mozhet li VLKSM," 137.

40. Shatskin, "O sovetakh," 4-5.

41. Shatskin, "Eshche o sovetakh," 7.

42. *Vtoroi s"ezd*, 20.

43. Ibid., 50, 53.

44. Ibid., 53-54.

45. Ibid., 175.

46. Ibid., 55.

47. Ibid., 54.

48. Ibid., 54-55.



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49. Ibid., 53.
50. Ibid., 153.
51. Komsomol factions within the trade unions had been presented as an alternative to the controversial trade union sections in the spring of 1919.
52. V. Dunaevskii, "Oktiabr' i trud rabochei molodezhi," *IUK*, November 1919, no. XV: 4.
53. Ibid., 5.
54. Vladimir Ivanov, "Inspekttsiia truda i rabochei molodezhi," *PP*, 17 December 1919, 2. See also, "Rezoliutsii plenuma TsK i predstavitelei gub. k-tov (13-15 dekabriia). Ob ekonomicheskopravovoi rabote," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 26 March 1920, 1.
55. "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo otdela Tsentral'nogo Komiteta RKSM," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 6 April 1920, no. II: 2.
56. *PP*, 17 December 1919, 2.
57. "Rezoliutsii plenuma TsK i predstavitelei gub k-tov," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 26 March 1920, 1.
58. V. Dunaevskii, "Pod znamenem prostykh, no vazhnykh zadach," *IUK*, January 1920, no. II (18): 4.
59. "Rezoliutsii plenuma TsK i predstavitelei gub. k-tov," *PP*, 23 December 1919, 4.
60. "K rabote soiuz," *PP*, 7 January 1920, 4.
61. For a verbatim account of the project for young assistants to the labor inspectorate, see "Privlechenie rabochei molodezhi k rabote po okhrana truda podrostkov," *PP*, 17 February 1920, 4; "Postanovlenie N.K.T. i S. Ob. ob assistentakh inspektorov truda iz sredi rabochei molodezhi," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 26 June 1920, 1; *Iunosheskaia Pravda*, 4 June 1920, supplement, 2.
62. V. Rabinovich, "Pervaia shkola assistantov," *Iunosheskaia Pravda*, 11 July 1920, 4.
63. Youths between the ages of sixteen and eighteen would work a full eight-hour day, while fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds would work six hours per day. Youths under the age of sixteen would not be subject to labor conscription. "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo otdela Tsentral'nogo Komiteta RKSM," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, April 1920, no. II: 1.
64. Ibid., 2; N. Semashko, "The Tasks of Public Health in Russia" and "Work of the People's Commissariat of Health," *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, ed. Wm. G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1984), 145-50, 157-58; Serge, *Memoirs*, 116-17; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, v. II, 335.
65. *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, April 1920, no. II: 2.
66. "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo otdela s 15 apr. 1920 g.," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, April 1920, no. II: 1; Tatarov, "Nashi udarnye punkty," *IUP*, August 1920, No. VIII: 0.
67. "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo otdela TsK RKSM s 15 apr. 1920 g.," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 1 August 1920, no. VII: 1.
68. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879-1921* (New York: Random House, 1965), 489, 492; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, 372-73; Alfred Rosmer, *Moscow under Lenin*, trans. I. H. Birchall (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 117-18.
69. Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, 373; Alexandra Kollontai, *Selected Writings*, ed. Alix Holt, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 151-64.
70. N. Tatarov, "Trudovaia armiia i soiuzy molodezhi," *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4; F.

- Drebezgov, "Rabochaia molodezh' v sovetskom stroitel'stve," *PP*, 25 February 1920, 4.
71. V. Ivanov, "Molodezh' na trudovom fronte," *PP*, 2 March 1920, 4.
72. I. Simonov, "Obshchee sobranie molodezhi Obukhovskogo zavoda," *PP*, 2 March 1920, 4.
73. For examples of the campaign for the lengthening of the work day for youths, see *Iunyi kommunar*, 27 April 1920, 2; *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 16 May 1920, 3.
74. The economic theses presented by Dunaevskii at the second plenary session were published in *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 25 April 1920, 3; *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 1 May 1920, no. III: 2.
75. See Kuznetsov's remarks in *Iunyi kommunar*, 7 May 1920, 1.
76. N. Tatarov, "Nashi udarnye punkty," *IUP*, 10.
77. "V riady Kommunisticheskogo Soiuzna Molodezhi," *PP*, 17 February 1920, 4.
78. *Iunyi kommunar*, 11 December 1919, 2.
79. Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, 499; Chamberlin, *Russian Revolution*, vol. II, 373.
80. For an account of Dunaevskii's report at the Conference, see "Bespartiinaia konferentsiia molodezhi," *PP*, 7 February 1920, 2.
81. *PP*, 17 December 1919, 2. For the Moscow survey, see *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 16 May 1920, 4.
82. For an example of efforts in a Moscow district to establish communal housing, see *Iunyi kommunar*, 27 April 1920, 2.
83. *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 26 June 1920, no. V: 2; *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 4 June 1920, supplement, 2.
84. "Na domu ili v stolovykh," *PP*, 11 May 1920, 4.
85. "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo otdela Tsetral'nogo Komiteta RKSM (s 15 apr. do 1 avg. 1920 g.)," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 2 August 1920, no. VII: 1.
86. For example, see Pervukhin's speech at the non-Party youth conference in "Bespartiinaia konferentsiia," *PP*, 7 February 1920, 2; "Molodezh' v bor'be za chistotu!," *ibid.*; "O bor'be s epidemiiami," *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4; *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, August 1920, 1.
87. "Bespartiinaia konferentsiia molodezhi," *PP*, 7 February 1920, 2; V. Ivanov, "Rabochaia molodezh' v sovetskom stroitel'stve," *PP*, 25 February 1920, 4.
88. Ivanov, "Molodezh' i kvalifitsirovannaia rabochaia sila," *PP*, 10 February 1920, 4.
89. "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo otdela s 15 apr.," *Izvetiia TsK R KSM*, August 1920, no. VII: 1.
90. For example, see V. Ivanov, "Molodezh' i kvalifitsirovannaia rabochaia sila," *PP*, 2 March 1920, 4; "Nasha sotsial'naia pomoshch'," *PP*, 18 May 1920, 4; "Polozhenie ob uchastii RKSM v bor'be za unichtozhenie detskoii spekulatsii i prestupnichestva," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 1 August 1920, No. VII: 2; "Otchet ekonomicheskopravovogo s 15 apr. ....," *PP*, 1.
91. For an example of management resistance to Komsomol efforts, see A. Shefer, "Kak organizuet'sia i rabotaet kollektiv," *PP*, 27 January 1920, 4.
92. E. Averbakh, "Partiia i soiuz," *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 25 April 1920, 1; V. Ivanov, "Sozdavaite komissii po okhrane truda," *PP*, 18 May 1920, 4.
93. In many cases, the inspectors found themselves in the position of having to found Komsomol factory collectives. *PP*, 30 December 1919, 4.
94. V. Ivanov, "Snatie maloletnikh s rabot," *PP*, 17 December 1919, 2.
95. At the third plenary session on 1 August 1920 some of the Petrograd delegates, headed by Peter Smorodin, supported Dunaevskii's position.

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96. *Iunyi kommunar*, 27 April 1920, 1.

97. For example, see Shatskin's introduction to the collection of documents, "Mozhet li VLKSM"; G. Levгур, *Istoriia RKSM: konspekt dlia rukovoditelei* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1923); lu. S. Afanas'ev, E. Ia Remizova, and Z. M. Ivanova, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii VLKSM* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1969). The American historian Ralph Fisher has also focused on Dunaevskii's challenge to political structure rather than his economic critique. See *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbian University Press, 1959), 23-25.

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## The Komsomol Comes of Age: Komsomol-Party Relations at the End of the Civil War

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The socialist youth movement emerged in 1917 as the organized expression of a particular sector of the working class. It brought to the fore such youth-specific issues as the six-hour work day, wage parity with adults, separate representation in factory committees and other workers' institutions, professional training, free universal education, and the right to vote for eighteen-year-olds. Yet, from the beginning the movement's organizers faced the dilemma of expressing those particularistic drives while at the same time maintaining their ties and commitment to the larger workers' movement. Consistently, youth organizers felt that the movement's destiny was intrinsically tied to the fate of the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

In many ways, the Civil War simplified that dilemma by making the defense of the Revolution the paramount task. As the Komsomol became a conveyor belt to the Red Army during the Civil War, it subordinated the movement's economic and cultural demands to the military effort. The SSRM and the Komsomol met the needs of the new state for politically reliable personnel with unsurpassed enthusiasm. The Komsomol played an important ideological role, popularizing the ideals and tasks of the state and the Communist party. By the end of the Civil War, that ideological function became the backbone of the Komsomol organization, placing the League in a special relationship to the Communist party.

During the Civil War the pluralism that characterized 1917 gave way to calls for unity before the common enemy and for internal discipline and cohesion. The war thus strengthened those tendencies within the workers' movement to minimize internal differences.<sup>2</sup> The state's struggle for survival undermined the toleration of potentially



divisive agendas. The majority of the Komsomol leadership echoed this sentiment of unity, and molded the organization's theory and practice accordingly.

Attempting to secure recognition for the Komsomol as the exclusive representative of the specific interests of youth, the League's leadership concluded that organized youth could not stand in opposition to the state in defense of the particular interests of its constituency. It concurred with the Party that the workers' state and the Communist party had sole responsibility for the defense of all workers, including working-class youth. Those youth leaders believed that the League could no longer justify setting itself apart from the rest of the organized working-class movement.

Dunaevskii's challenge to the League's economic program showed that not all Komsomol leaders shared that integrative vision of the organization. As the Civil War drew to an end, a growing wave of dissatisfaction swept over the country, engulfing stalwart allies of the Communists, including part of the Komsomol leadership and rank and file. Many local activists and even some members of the Komsomol Central Committee criticized the League's reluctance to assert its autonomy and its willingness to relinquish its original function as advocate of the specific interests of youth. Their challenge contained autonomist political connotations that could not go unheeded by the dominant sectors within the Komsomol leadership and, more important, by the Party.

The economic department of the Komsomol's Central Committee, headed by Vladimir Dunaevskii, was the fulcrum of this intense controversy. The *dunaevshchina*, as it was called by its detractors, was the most serious controversy within the organization: both in geographic scope and content it threatened the Komsomol's relationship to the Party and the organization's viability as a political entity within the Soviet state.

During the controversy, the Petrograd organization played the role of spokesman for and defender of the dominant group. Petrograd's role as national champion of the centralist position underscored that organization's high level of integration into the party and government machinery. It reflected, as well, the absence of any other regional organization capable of mustering the degree of discipline and unity of purpose needed to counteract the impressive number of regional branches arrayed against the League's Central Committee.

## Vanguard or Assistant: Redefining the Role of Organized Youth

The first issue of the Komsomol's central organ, *Iunyi kommunist* (1918), described youth as the advanced columns of the revolutionary legions:

Youth represents the vanguard of the social revolution. In Russia, as in the West, it stands in the front ranks of the movement. Youth is more perceptive, and has not been poisoned by the prejudices and ideas of bourgeois society. The adult generation of the working class lived through the horrors of the imperialist war; the war exhausted its strength, [and] sometimes it yields to feelings of fatigue. Youth is strong and brave. It understands that the business of revolution is its own business and, knowing this, gives thousands of brave warriors for a better future.<sup>3</sup>

An article by Oskar Ryvkin counterposed the militancy of youth to the initial moderation of the working class in the spring and early summer of 1917. Ryvkin ascribed the movement's early identification with the Communist party to the fact that, "as the most militant element of the working class," youth had been incapable of straddling fences and refused to adopt the conciliatory position assumed by the rest of their class.<sup>4</sup> In the course of 1919 this avant-gardist tone gave way to the more integrative image of the younger helper of the revolutionary worker as embodied by the Communist party.

Though adult Party activists acknowledged the special attributes of youth--energy, enthusiasm, dedication--they stressed those characteristics that contributed to the well-being of the workers' state as a whole. In the summer of 1919 Zlata Lilina told a mass meeting of students and young workers that youth made up the changing guard for the tired adult comrades. In so doing, Lilina, as spokesperson for the Petrograd Party and state leadership, conferred on youth a special status that appealed to youth's avant-gardist inclinations. Trotsky evoked this image when he greeted the delegates to the Second Komsomol Congress in October 1919:

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The entire revolution is present here, in your persons, and that is why I greet you with joy in the name of that old generation which earlier came on the stage of history, which fought bitterly in the past and [now], covered with blood, takes care to open the gates of a bright future to youth.<sup>5</sup>

Such pronouncements recalled Trud i svet's vision of the young worker fighting side by side with the proletarian father and older brother at the barricades. However, youth could play the role of vanguard only within the context of furthering the Revolution. This was succinctly expressed in Ryvkin's opening remarks to the Second Congress:

We wish that the Second Congress will make our League an even mightier vanguard of the Communist International. Together with adult workers, united within the Third International, hand in hand with them, we shall fight until we attain a definitive victory.<sup>6</sup>

### Komsomol-Party Relations: The League as the Party's Reserves

At its Sixth Congress in 1917 the Party acknowledged the significance of the youth movement to the revolutionary movement and the need for the Party to become involved in its development. To facilitate greater involvement, the Party's Central Committee was asked to establish instructors' courses to train youth activists and to provide guidance to the Socialist youth leagues.<sup>7</sup>

In practice the pro-Bolshevik youth movement received little attention from the Party during the turbulent months before and after the October Revolution. It is difficult to ascertain the precise nature of Komsomol-Party relations in 1918. Not only is the available information sketchy, there seem to have been vast local differences in the degree of cooperation between the two organizations. During the Civil War some Komsomol leaders felt that the Party was not doing enough for the League.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of 1919 Ryvkin insisted that all local youth leagues worked closely with the local Communist party organizations; where this did not occur, the Party organizations were to blame.<sup>9</sup> Lazar' Shatskin leveled this same accusation more forcefully at the Eighth Party Congress in March

1919. Shatskin decried the Party's neglect of the Komsomol, adding that when the youth movement received attention, it often took the form of patronizing relations on the part of the Party.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the early period, the Petrograd organization enjoyed the ideological and material support of Bolshevik leaders. While it appears that many provincial Party organizations did have weak ties with local Komsomol committees, and even showed hostility or resistance to the youth organization, this was not the case in Petrograd.<sup>11</sup> In 1917 young Bolsheviks played an important role in the radicalization of the youth movement and in its definition as a pro-Bolshevik entity. During critical periods, Petrograd Party leaders became involved in the organization's internal problems. For example, at the time of the Youth League's near collapse in the spring of 1918, the Party decided to recall from military duty young Communists who had been active in the youth movement the previous year. These activists were given the task of reviving the moribund youth organization.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the Eighth Party Congress, the most extensive Party document defining relations between itself and the League was a letter sent by the Party's Central Committee to all its local branches in November 1918. To strengthen the presence of Party cadres within the League and guarantee direct Party influence over the work done among young workers, the Central Committee recommended that all Party members of Komsomol age join the League. This document conferred a new status on the Komsomol:

The RKSM is the school that trains new, conscious Communists. Party organizations must concentrate their efforts so that the youth league may develop a broad and successful work.<sup>13</sup>

Though not all Party organizations complied with this recommendation, the Petrograd organization went beyond the Central Committee's letter and required all young Party members to join the League. The Petrograd Committee also sent a few Party activists into the League's city committee. Most important, it made all party organizations responsible for attracting youth into the League and for organizing new collectives in factories and other enterprises.<sup>14</sup> In effect, the Petrograd Komsomol owed its relatively rapid growth in 1919 to its joint recruitment efforts with the Party. For example, when the youth collectives in Spasskii district collapsed in March



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1919, League activists asked the Party district committee to carry out agitation on the League's behalf to encourage the registration of new members.<sup>15</sup>

The Petrograd Komsomol made structural changes at the beginning of 1919 that gave an active role to young Party cadres. In February the Komsomol Petrograd Committee separated the functions of secretary and organizer within the district committees. While the secretary assumed all organizational duties, such as the registration of members, collection of dues, and recording of attendance, the district organizer became the political and ideological guide. The League's district organizer was a Party member, but, more significantly, part of the core of organizers within the district's Party committee. The League organizer, directly responsible to the League's Petrograd Committee, was in charge of the district committee's Communist faction. His functions included establishing new youth collectives and serving as a direct link between the League and the Party.

This new relationship and corresponding organizational restructuring received the blessings of the Komsomol's Seventh City Conference, which called upon all League organizations to guarantee the creation of permanent cadres of young Communists. Party members and candidates within a given Komsomol district committee elected a representative or organizer to maintain ties with Party organizers within that district. Periodic meetings of Party organizers in which the individual officer participated served as the guiding force in the work of the League's district committee. In order to provide continuity and stability, local organizations were asked to ensure that this nucleus remain unchanged.<sup>16</sup> This stipulation was intended to offset the constantly changing leadership and rank and file that characterized the Civil War period. In practice, the Petrograd Party and Komsomol organizations established a much closer relationship than that defined by the Komsomol program or Party resolutions and instructions.

The Eighth Party Congress approved a landmark resolution on Party-Komsomol relations. Drafted by Shatskin, the document affirmed the need to integrate youth into active participation in the consolidation of the Revolution. At the Congress Shatskin argued that, at a time when the Party evinced such great concern over its growing isolation from its working class base, it had to recognize that the incorporation of youth into the revolutionary process was its only guarantee that the class would succeed in consolidating its

victory. Youth was a determining protagonist because it was freer from "bourgeois prejudices" than were adult workers, and because it was the natural "change of guard" (*smena*) to the leadership that had begun the Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

The resolution adopted by the Eighth Party Congress reiterated the principle of Komsomol autonomy. The document affirmed the Komsomol's exclusive right to conduct Communist work among youth and expressed the party's commitment to promote the League's continued existence and further development by pledging ideological and material help.<sup>18</sup> The resolution directed the Party and Komsomol Central Committees to work out a set of instructions to guide Party work among youth and define the relationship between Party and League organizations. Shatskin stressed that such instructions must determine whether the League was subordinate to the Party or an independent body.<sup>19</sup>

In compliance with this request, the Komsomol Central Committee held an enlarged plenary session with provincial representatives to define the Komsomol's views on the issue of subordination and independence.<sup>20</sup> The plenary approved a resolution that, though reiterating the Komsomol's right to have its own charter, declared that the organization worked under the control of the Communist party both at the central and local levels. The Komsomol's Central Committee was subordinate to the Party's central body. At the local level Party control would be effected through local Party committees, thereby universalizing the experience of the Petrograd League.

In contrast to the more vague expression of solidarity contained in the League's first program, the resolution declared the Komsomol's acceptance of the program and tactics of the Communist party. While it did not mention the word "independence," the resolution cautioned that control by the local Party organizations must not assume the character of petty tutelage or the patronizing tendencies that Shatskin had decried. Instead, such control was to be effected within the limits of the Komsomol's charter and instructions.

At the Seventh City Conference of the Petrograd League, Zinoviev, calling for closer ties between the Party and the League, claimed that no clear distinction existed between the two bodies: "The Komsomol is part of the Party."<sup>21</sup> In so doing, Zinoviev negated the earlier official relationship between the two and signaled the coming of major changes. In preparation for the Second Komsomol

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Congress scheduled for the fall of 1919, two major articles appeared in Komsomol journals that set the stage for the programmatic repudiation of the League's independence.<sup>22</sup>

This coincided with the publication of the Instructions drawn up by both Central Committees and adopted by the Party in August. A synthesis of the Eighth Congress resolution, the decision of the spring plenary session of the Komsomol Central Committee, and the practice of the large urban organizations, the Instructions confirmed the League's subordination to the Party's governing organs. The League retained its autonomy, not its independence. The Party pledged to establish new Komsomol organizations where there were none by creating "initiating groups" of young Party members. All Party members under the age of twenty were now required to join the Komsomol.

Of particular long-term importance, the Instructions provided for the creation of Communist factions within local Komsomol organizations. Such factions could be established within peasant League organizations that had predominantly "kulak" memberships and in any local branch that had no Communists in its leadership. Theoretically, Communist factions were to be established only when deemed necessary and would not have the right to disperse the branch or its governing body.<sup>23</sup>

The Instructions transformed the relationship between Party and League as defined by the Party's Sixth and the Komsomol's First congresses. The resolutions adopted by those bodies in 1917 had defined autonomy as excluding organizational subordination to the Party. The Party and the youth organization were linked only in spirit. The Instructions thus altered the Komsomol's program without the approval of a national congress. Ryvkin justified the substitution of independence with organizational subordination by explaining that, just as young workers were a part of the working class, the Komsomol, its representative, could only be part of the Communist party.<sup>24</sup>

The Second Komsomol Congress, which ratified the Instructions of August 1919, marked a watershed in Party-Komsomol relations. At the gathering Ryvkin defended the control that Party central and local organizations would have over corresponding Komsomol organs on the ground that such control would serve as guidance. Ideologically, the relationship reflected the Party's claim to full responsibility for the entire Communist movement of the working class, of which the Komsomol was only a part.<sup>25</sup>

The Party's requirement that all its members ages twenty and under join the Komsomol strengthened Communist presence within the League's leadership. By the Second Congress it was already assumed that all members of the Komsomol Central Committee would be Party members.<sup>26</sup> But the change became visible in the League's base as well. By the fall of 1919 over half of the Petrograd Komsomol held joint membership in both organizations.<sup>27</sup>

Yet the League's leadership was not satisfied with the concrete results of the Instructions and the Second Congress. The Komsomol leadership denounced the resistance on the part of young Party members to join the League.<sup>28</sup> Probably, the refusers felt they were being demoted from the Party to the League. While this problem seemed to have eased by the beginning of 1920, thereafter the Komsomol continuously charged that the Party gave neither enough attention nor material resources to the League. For example, in some districts and provinces, local party committees refused to include the Komsomol committees in their budgets.<sup>29</sup> With the growing concentration of state functions within the Party, the League's leadership recognized that it was powerless to carry out its basic programs and even to secure meeting places and offices without the Party's active support. Above all, the Komsomol leadership criticized the Party for failing to provide the necessary Party cadres to replenish the League's pool of activists. This was couched in bitter reminders that, if the League was suffering from a paucity of activists, it was only because it had generously given its best to the military effort and the state and Party apparatus.<sup>30</sup> The youth leadership held the Party morally responsible for correcting the Komsomol's shortcomings.

Paradoxically, Komsomol leaders also charged that some Party organizations had become too involved in League affairs, to the point of obstructing their work.<sup>31</sup> At the Ninth Party Congress in the spring of 1920 B. Volin and Iu. Lutovinov proposed eliminating the Komsomol and replacing it with Party departments for youth, similar in character to the women's departments or *zhenotdely*.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, according to Ryvkin, liquidation had already become a reality in Archangel and Siberia, where Party committees had dissolved Komsomol committees and replaced them with youth departments within the Party organs. Lutovinov and like-minded Party leaders saw no justification for an autonomous organization when local youth leagues worked as Party branches. Why continue to have a separate body when, in practice, young Communists did all the local work



among youth and controlled the League's local committees?<sup>33</sup>

This extreme position was not a serious threat to the Komsomol's viability since it lacked widespread support among the delegates to the Party's Ninth Congress. Nonetheless, it reflected the existence of major differences of opinion within the Party leadership with regard to the League. The Komsomol leadership faced a dual problem. On the one hand, the majority of the Party accepted the League's continued autonomous existence but did not offer it adequate support; on the other, there were Party members who felt that work among youth was too important to be left in the hands of an autonomous entity. This tension forced Komsomol and Party leaders to recognize the need for the Party to delineate in greater detail its organizational relationship to the League.

In the summer of 1920 the Party's Central Committee circulated a letter to all local branches recognizing that insufficient attention was being paid to the Komsomol and that, at the same time, many Party provincial and district committees were guilty of annoying, patronizing relations toward the League. It called for the disbandment of all local Party departments conducting youth work independent of or parallel to the Komsomol's. Second, it asked each provincial committee to appoint one of its members to act as Party representative within the Komsomol's provincial committee. Finally, it limited the Party's control over Komsomol work specifically to the supervision of the League's general line of work and the content of the Komsomol's agitational and propaganda activities, and to the provision of material help and personnel.<sup>34</sup>

The circular letter couched the Party's responsibility to guarantee the training of Komsomol activists in pragmatic terms:

Since at present the League plays such an enormous role in the preparation of the Communist reserves..., then it is in the Party's interest to provide the necessary activists.<sup>35</sup>

All Party schools were asked to create special youth sections and to allow the Komsomol to retain up to one-quarter of the young activists trained by such sections. In conjunction with this guaranteed training of youth activists by the Party, the letter called for an end to the drain of Komsomol cadres into military, Party, and government work. Finally, local Party committees were asked to fund Komsomol committees in the same proportion as other Party work and to give

Komsomol committees access to paper for their own publications or space in the local newspapers.

The letter of August 1920 implied a structural convergence of the Party and the Komsomol. The League's apparatus, which had come to parallel the Party's, now underwent further modifications to facilitate closer working relations. For example, in August 1920 the Komsomol's Petrograd city and provincial committees were merged, a process that had taken place in the Party apparatus earlier that year. While closer bonds resulted in an organizational structure patterned after the Party's increasingly centralized and hierarchical model, it also guaranteed the Komsomol's viability. In this respect, the Komsomol's development reflected a general trend within Party life that resulted in a more systematic and centralized approach to political activity in an effort to deal with the chaotic relations between the center and local branches. Komsomol activists, like the Party's own local cadres, came to see centralization as "a vital means of obtaining regular and reliable services, information, guidance, and succour."<sup>36</sup>

The Party recognized the symbiotic nature of its relationship with the Komsomol. This recognition was implicit in the directives of August 1920, especially in the justification for greater Party involvement with the Komsomol: "The League fulfills one of the most important functions of the Party. . . . To help the League means, in the final analysis, helping the Party itself."<sup>37</sup> While the Komsomol derived prestige and concrete support from its relations with the Party, the latter found in the youth organization an invaluable ideological ally and a source of activists who performed a multitude of state functions.

### The Internal Crisis of 1920

Though there was consensus among Komsomol leaders that a closer working relationship with the Party was imperative, there were many activists who also wanted a more autonomous status for the Komsomol. This striving for autonomy was particularly strong among those League activists involved in economic work. Autonomist sentiments only grew when, in the late spring and summer of 1920, the League's Central Committee tried to curtail the power of its economic-legal departments and to subordinate them to the newly created secretariat. This effort to restrain the troublesome economic departments reflected a redefinition of the League's functions away

from economic activities to purely political ones. It was also part of a trend toward centralization of decision-making and responsibility on the part of central organs, a development that was resented and challenged by many within the League. The consolidation of this centralizing drive caused profound dissatisfaction on the part of some Central Committee and provincial Komsomol leaders with the general work of the Komsomol governing body.

By the spring of 1920 much of the central and provincial leadership agreed that the League was facing an internal crisis due to the decline of the organization's working-class base, the dominant position of students in the leadership, and the general inactivity of the rank and file. Major differences over those issues made the summer and fall of 1920 into the League's stormiest season. In the process, a sizable number of League activists rebelled not only against the policies of the Komsomol's Central Committee, but, also, against the loss of the League's autonomy in relation to the Party.

The dispute first surfaced in an article by Dunaevskii on the Komsomol's internal problems. Perturbed by the League's failure to become a mass organization, Dunaevskii, head of the economic department within the Central Committee, charged that the organization's central body had divorced itself from the reality of the young masses and was concerned almost exclusively with its political and agitational functions. The Komsomol's Central Committee, according to Dunaevskii, must become a specialist on the living and working situation of youth and reflect the needs and concerns of its constituency. As a specialist, the Komsomol should help the government design and implement youth programs without preempting it of its role. As part of this proposal, the Komsomol would send youth apprentices to get practical training within state organs.<sup>38</sup> To develop its expertise, the Central Committee would have to revise its *modus operandi*. Above all, it would have to become more responsive to the actual demands of youths, more flexible so as to be able to reflect the changing conditions and needs of youth, and more accurate in gathering information to develop working plans. These three tasks would be accomplished by shedding the committee's penchant for pageantry, external symbols, and staged ceremonies and events on youth's behalf and by transforming the secretariat and the central organ, *lunyi kommunist*, to accomplish the new tasks. Most likely, Dunaevskii was influenced by the *zhenotdel*'s use of this novel type of apprenticeship. For the *zhenotdel*, as for the Komsomol, the goal was to mobilize and involve the masses in political, social, and economic

work, and in so doing, integrate them in the revolutionary process. It was an effective way of creating consensus by making common citizens active participants in the new order. Apprenticeships were done in government departments, trade unions, factories, schools, hospitals, and food services. In the course of their apprenticeship, the participants gained administrative expertise. When they reported their experiences to the representative assemblies that had selected them, the former apprentices became political educators as well.<sup>39</sup>

Dunaevskii agreed with the dominant group that, in order to become a more effective organ, the Central Committee needed greater internal cohesion. But he maintained that cohesion and unity must not become a muzzle over free expression of opinion, rather, the central body must encourage initiative in discussions and must guarantee more frequent, regular meetings with representatives from local organizations, thereby ensuring tighter bonds with the League's local branches.

Underlying Dunaevskii's critique of the Central Committee was an attempt to recuperate and solidify the League's autonomy within the state. The Komsomol's projected role as an expert on youth would give the Central Committee specifically, and the Komsomol in general, the kind of initiative and autonomy first envisaged by the authors of the Socialist Youth League's Charter in 1917. Though Dunaevskii saw the Komsomol as ultimately part of the working class and its state, his claim to make the Central Committee an expert on youth conferred on the League not only autonomy but equality with adults.

In Dunaevskii's vision, the Komsomol would continue to fulfill a crucial political function within the Soviet state: that of ideological guide and political educator of the country's youth. But he questioned the manner in which that political function had been carried out in the recent past. In particular, he rejected the "cribbing" or regurgitating ideas from articles written by adults. Instead, the Central Committee should clarify and explain the state's and the Party's political campaigns and put them in a historical perspective. Thus, he proposed a more creative approach to the fulfillment of political tasks and suggested that Komsomol leaders exercise greater initiative even in this sensitive sphere.

Dunaevskii's article set the framework for the August 1920 plenary session with representatives of provincial organizations. Elaborating on Dunaevskii's position, his supporters (called *dunaevtsy* by Soviet historians) at that gathering challenged the capacity of the League's central organ to guide the youth movement. They accused the



central leadership of having created an elite that was unable and unwilling to generate any type of constructive activity.<sup>40</sup>

Shatskin, Ryvkin, and Iurovskaia, who led the dominant group, anticipated widespread opposition and attempted to curtail the discussion at the plenary from its outset.<sup>41</sup> But their efforts were frustrated: Dunaevskii served as spokesman the majority of the Central Committee members and the provincial delegates as well.<sup>42</sup> As a result, the gathering's resolution on the Central Committee denounced that body's work. The Central Committee was asked to pay special attention to its political-educational work, to the establishment of its technical and organizational apparatus, and to its relationship to the Communist party. Two organizational problems were singled out for criticism: the committee's inability to offer proper leadership during the organization's rapid membership growth and its inadequate fulfillment of the decisions reached at plenary sessions.<sup>43</sup>

The out-voted members of the Central Committee seemed peculiarly helpless before the revolt of the local activists. In her response, Iurovskaia affirmed the correctness of the Central Committee's strategy over the past year and gave the central leadership credit for the League's impressive growth in 1920. Shatskin turned the arguments of the local representatives against them and blamed their lack of initiative for the Komsomol's woes. Ryvkin's response was the most ominous: he threatened at least one of the critics, Fokin, with a Party trial for his claim that the Central Committee no longer functioned as a governing body. Equally significant, Ryvkin charged the critics with having constituted themselves into a faction.<sup>44</sup>

The third plenary session was followed by an open declaration of war. The dispute did not surprise the Komsomol's mid-level and central leadership. Differences of opinion, especially over economic work, had been aired in the pages of *Iunosheskaia pravda* (Moscow) since the spring of 1920, and the newspaper had become the mouthpiece for the growing dissent movement within the League.<sup>45</sup> Even before the fateful third plenary, the central leadership had become aware that Moscow was only the most important among the many provincial organizations that had become alienated from the central leadership. The opposition was concentrated primarily in Moscow province, the central industrial area, the Ukraine, Siberia, and the Caucasus.<sup>46</sup> The presence of such a large contingent of representatives from the borderlands among the dissenters gave some

justification to the assertion made by the dominant group that the opposition reflected localist sentiments, especially among Ukrainians.<sup>47</sup>

In the early part of the summer of 1920 the Central Committee removed major oppositionists from their local organizations and reassigned them to other geographic areas, seeking to isolate them from their base of support. Though the Central Committee attributed the relocation of personnel to its quest for more effective use of personnel, the opposition saw the reassignments as politically motivated and decried the procedure at the third plenary session and, later, at the Third National Congress. But the reassignments continued throughout the summer and fall.<sup>48</sup>

### The Party Intervenes

Immediately after the August plenary, the rebellion escalated to new levels. The editorial staff of the newspaper *Iunosheskaia pravda*, which was controlled by oppositionists, published a laudatory account of the third plenary and warned the dissenters of probable organizational sanctions against them. The editorial board asked the opposition to continue the struggle at the upcoming Third Komsomol Congress.<sup>49</sup> At about the same time, the dominant group within the Central Committee took drastic and far-reaching measures against the opposition. It revamped the editorial board of *Iunosheskaia pravda* and confiscated all copies of the inflammatory 15 August issue. More significant in the long run, the day after the closure of the third plenary, Ryvkin, Shatskin, and Iurovskaia referred the dispute to the Party's Orgbureau on the grounds that the Komsomol Central Committee's functioning had been impaired by the existence of two warring groups.

After a joint conference between Ryvkin and Shatskin with one of the Party's secretaries, N. Krestinskii, the Orgbureau decided to remove Dunaevskii, Polifem, and Iakovlev from the League's Central Committee and from youth work altogether.<sup>50</sup> The reassignments, a relatively novel practice even within the Party, provoked a virulent reaction on the part of Komsomol activists who felt it was being applied solely for punitive reasons.<sup>51</sup> Dunaevskii reacted by circulating a letter informing all regional organizations of the Party's decision, and, more important, calling them to action.<sup>52</sup>

On 2 September the Party's Central Committee punished

Dunaevskii's latest breach of internal discipline by suspending him from the Party for a period of six months. On 10 September the Orgbureau sent a letter to all local Party organizations informing them of the Komsomol's internal crisis and of the decision to remove Dunaevskii, Polifem, and Iakovlev from Komsomol work, and the subsequent suspension of Dunaevskii's Party membership. According to that letter, the Komsomol's crucial role as provider of future Communist cadres justified the Party's decision to turn its attention to the "anti-Communist" tendencies expressed by some League activists and, in particular, by Dunaevskii. To the Orgbureau, these tendencies counterposed the interests of youth to those of the entire working class and, by extension, the interests of the organized youth movement against those of the Communist party.<sup>53</sup> The letter said nothing of Dunaevskii's widespread popularity and, therefore, of the mass appeal that this autonomist vision of the Komsomol enjoyed among rank and file members. Instead, it ascribed the schism to personal intrigue and to the instability of the dissenters. Local Party committees were asked to give their active support to the "healthy" elements within the League who were now waging such a difficult battle.<sup>54</sup>

The Party's intervention was momentous. Not only had it thrown its support behind a particular sector within the Komsomol, but in so doing, it had replaced the League's elected governing body with what Dunaevskii described as the provisional bureau within the Party's Central Committee in charge of "youth work" and of preparing the convocation of the Third Komsomol Congress. From Dunaevskii's standpoint, the action had two sides that had to be fought on moral grounds. First, the Ryvkin-Shatskin group, feeling its support dwindling at the local level, resorted to the ultimate weapon of Party discipline in its efforts to silence the heated and widespread critique. It was imperative to show all League members that the discussion and the decision taken at the third plenary were not the brainchild of isolated individuals but had considerable rank and file support. Second, and most significant, the action undermined the League's existence as an autonomous organization and threatened to turn it, instead, into a youth department within the Communist party. In Dunaevskii's opinion, the incapacity of the Ryvkin group to resolve the conflict without outside assistance had shown the leadership's political immaturity and discredited the Komsomol before the Party and the nation.<sup>55</sup>

Dunaevskii had captured the dilemma that the internal split

within the League represented for Ryvkin and Shatskin. Apart from needing to end the feud in order to maintain their own positions within the Komsomol, they had to affirm the League's usefulness and, therefore, relative stability to those Party members who questioned the political expedience of having a separate youth organization. The youth leadership's admission that they could not resolve the schism satisfactorily without resorting to higher authority must have been embarrassing precisely before those Party members who felt that the League's autonomous existence had allowed the internal turmoil to develop uncontrollably, thereby jeopardizing the League's political reliability.

Earlier that year, at the Ninth Party Congress, Ryvkin successfully defended the League's autonomy on the grounds that it was not a narrow organization of Party youth but a crucial mass movement that, led by the Party, was responsible for bringing the young masses into the Communist fold.<sup>56</sup> Ryvkin faced a more complex situation when the Komsomol came under attack once more at the Ninth Party Conference in September 1920, during the high point of the so-called *dunaevshchina*. Ryvkin found himself on the defensive both within his own organization and in relation to some Party leaders.

On the grounds that the training of future cadres had been given little serious attention by the Party, Volin once again raised the feasibility of transferring all youth work to special Party departments for youth.<sup>57</sup> With unprecedented sharpness, Ryvkin countered the attack by alleging that the Party leadership had paid virtually no attention to the League until the present schism solidified. The Party itself was at least partly responsible for the crisis because, as soon as it spotted a gifted youth activist, it normally transferred that person into Party work, thereby leaving the League's provincial committees with new youth workers, "who could not be used at all," and who, nonetheless, were given no political training.<sup>58</sup> Ryvkin's assertion did not explain why a seasoned cadre like Dunaevskii found himself in the opposition; nevertheless, it succeeded in transferring some of the onus onto Party leaders.<sup>59</sup>

Ryvkin invited closer Party supervision of the Komsomol at the local level. Even more self-effacing was Ryvkin's justification for not eliminating the Komsomol as a separate entity. Ryvkin did not allude this time to the League's crucial role as political educator. Given the furor over the particularistic claims brought up by the *dunaevtsy*, Ryvkin could hardly seek justification for the League's



existence in the special needs of youth. The Party would be incorrect in liquidating it only because the organization fulfilled such an important political function in the international arena. Ryvkin promised to upgrade internal discipline and to correct the League's problems at the upcoming Komsomol Congress.<sup>60</sup>

Ryvkin and the Komsomol enjoyed the support of very powerful Party leaders, in particular, of Krestinskii and Preobrazhenskii; the latter represented the Party Central Committee at the Komsomol Central Committee. In his report to the Ninth Party Conference, Krestinskii confirmed the Komsomol's autonomy in relation to the Party and the unacceptability of special youth departments within the Party's Central Committee or its provincial committees. However, Krestinskii acknowledged that the Party should confer special attention to youth work and proposed, among other measures, that local Party organizations appoint a person responsible for following Komsomol work closely and attending Komsomol meetings and conferences on a regular basis. Krestinskii advised that local Party committees finance Komsomol district organizations directly. Apparently, up to then provincial Party committees funded provincial Komsomol organizations, which were then directly responsible for funding their own district branches, thereby by-passing local Party committees. For his part, Preobrazhenskii rebuked those who wanted to turn the Komsomol into a Party department and accused them of not understanding "the colossal importance of creating a reserve of activists." Preobrazhenskii agreed with Ryvkin that inattentive provincial Party leaders were to blame for those Komsomol branches that were not working adequately. In the future, the heads of the provincial agitational-propaganda departments must also be responsible for provincial Komsomol organizations.<sup>61</sup>

Although Krestinskii rejected the motion in favor of integrating the Komsomol into the Party organization as a department, he dealt a severe blow to the concept of autonomy for the League. In order to influence the outcome of the forthcoming Komsomol congress, he called on all Party organizations to monitor the lists of Komsomol candidates running for elective positions at the provincial and national congresses so as to ensure that those lists included only "experienced and capable" youth leaders.<sup>62</sup> Shortly after the Ninth Conference, a plenary session of the Party's Central Committee went a step further: it decided to create a Communist party faction at the Third Komsomol Congress to gather information about the mood of the delegates and carry out Party directives at the

gathering. The plenary session also instructed Preobrazhenskii, Bukharin, and Andreev to conduct the congress itself.<sup>63</sup>

### **The Third Komsomol Congress and the Defeat of the *Dunaevshchina***

In retrospect, the outcome of the Komsomol's Third Congress (2-10 October 1920) seemed preordained. Yet this was not the prevailing perception of the Party, Komsomol, or opposition leaders on the eve of the congress. The Party was not sure that League activists would acquiesce to the creation of a faction. Moreover, the Party could not prevent Dunaevskii and his supporters from attending the gathering because, though Dunaevskii had been suspended from the Party, he was still a bonafide Komsomol member, as were his supporters. As a preventive measure, the Party leadership emphasized to the delegates that the *dunaevtsy* no longer voiced the Party line, even in those cases where they had not been expelled from the Party.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Party's Central Committee and of the dominant group within the Komsomol central organ, the majority of the delegates to the Third Congress sympathized with and supported the opposition.<sup>64</sup> Ironically, at the outset this was true even of the Party faction. Before the Congress opened, the majority of the delegations were prepared to cast a vote of no-confidence on the crucial discussion of the activities of the Komsomol Central Committee. There was consensus that, of the Central Committee's activities over the previous year, only economic work made any kind of impact throughout the youth organization and that was attributed largely to Dunaevskii's leadership.<sup>65</sup>

But the opposition was split on all other key issues. Dunaevskii's most recent actions, specifically the circulation of the letter that precipitated disciplinary action against him, undermined the support of even his staunchest defenders. While not all members of the opposition agreed that the letter constituted an "anti-Party" action, some agreed with the Party that it was a breach of discipline and, as such, merited his suspension. Further, there were disagreements over whether or not the League's Central Committee should be charged with pursuing an incorrect line in addition to the universally accepted charge of incompetence.<sup>66</sup> These issues were used by the Party faction to split the opposition on specific votes.

Unaware of the Party's decision to create the faction until the day before the congress opened, the dunaevtsy could not match Preobrazhenskii's masterful handling of the faction meetings. Preobrazhenskii circumvented a vote on the sensitive issue of the League's Central Committee, which would have provided the opposition a rallying point, and, instead, insisted that the faction vote to affirm or reject the Party's decision to suspend Dunaevskii. After similar exhortations from Bukharin, the faction voted that the Party had acted correctly. Before the actual opening of the congress, Preobrazhenskii had thus succeeded in shifting the focus of the discussion away from what the opposition saw as the central problems (dissatisfaction with the governing body) to what the Party saw as its own main concern (the relationship between itself and the Komsomol).<sup>67</sup>

The Petrograd organization played a key role in defending the Central Committee against the Dunaevskii opposition. Though the *pitertsy* did not constitute a homogeneous group, Tatarov, the chairman of the Petrograd Committee, was able to neutralize those *pitertsy* who did not agree with him and the dominant group within the Petrograd Committee. As a result, there were no Petrograd figures among the major opposition spokesmen at the congress. Earlier, at the third plenary session, Smorodin, one of the most important Petrograd activists, had sided with Dunaevskii against Shatskin and Ryvkin; apparently, he did not ally himself with the opposition thereafter. As a whole, the *pitertsy* defended the Ryvkin-Shatskin position even at the third plenary session.

To be sure, there were some *pitertsy* at the Congress who felt that Dunaevskii's letter did not constitute an anti-Party action, but this sentiment failed to materialize into support for the dunaevtsy. In fact, at the Third Congress the *pitertsy* not only lobbied against the dunaevtsy among the delegates, but became the backbone of the Central Committee's counter-offensive against Dunaevskii's supporters.<sup>68</sup>

The success of the Petrograd delegation in defending the line put forth by the Party and the League's Central Committee afforded it considerable power at the Third Congress. It was the Petrograd organization that drew up the list for candidates to the congressional presidium, a measure of the prestige of the city's organization. Not surprisingly, Dunaevskii's supporters were given a minority of seats within the presidium. But even these measures failed to give the Central Committee and the Pitertsy an unqualified victory against the

dunaevtsy. The degree of discontent had reached such proportions that the airing of opposition sentiment could not be avoided. The discussion on the Central Committee was thus the most acrimonious fight in any Komsomol congress to date.

The opposition reiterated the charges that had become familiar since the summer. Once again, the League was depicted as suffering from an inefficient bureaucracy that, cut off from the local organizations, substituted superficial slogans and events for real activity. At the core of this critique was the belief that all these ills had their roots in the League's changed social composition.<sup>69</sup> If the opposition's plank had become almost pedestrian, their tenacity was nonetheless impressive, especially amidst the efforts to restrain them; the feeling of alienation from the central leadership had not abated. In no uncertain terms, the majority of the delegates approved a resolution condemning the League's Central Committee.

Because the support for the opposition was extensive, the dominant group was forced to acknowledge the validity of the critique.<sup>70</sup> Overall, Ryvkin, the Central Committee's reporter, refrained from an all-out attack on the opposition and focused, instead, on the key issues raised by the latter. In so doing, Ryvkin was following Bukharin's lead. Both at the Congress and publicly, Bukharin had counseled against dismissing the rise of the opposition as the product of personal intrigue, an approach taken by Ryvkin's supporters.<sup>71</sup> The congress, according to Bukharin, had to deal with the problem of bureaucratization within the Komsomol leadership, the dying out of the internal life of the rank and file, the growth of anti-intellectual sentiments, separatism, and decentralization. The opposition's line had to be proven incorrect, but care had to be taken not to ostracize the base. Yet Bukharin himself indulged in discrediting the opposition's leaders, characterizing them as unbalanced individuals, who appealed to politically naive and unbalanced members.<sup>72</sup>

In his report on the Central Committee, Ryvkin depicted the League's double plight: a leadership crisis at the same time that the Komsomol was involved in an intense debate both internally and externally (with the Party leadership) over the League's relationship to the state and the Party. Ryvkin concurred that the leadership crisis, which was at the heart of the majority's criticism, stemmed from the incorporation of peasants and students into the membership and from the debilitating effects of the military mobilizations.<sup>73</sup> Ryvkin also dwelt on the mobilization's impeding the League's training



cadres. The Party shared responsibility for the crisis because, at the time of the mobilization to the Polish front, it had proceeded to mobilize Komsomol activists against the will of the League's Central Committee, which had ruled against carrying out a full Komsomol mobilization. (Ironically, the Party had refused to carry out a full mobilization of its own members.) The mobilizations had deprived the League of a base capable of generating its own leadership. Only the young "semi-bureaucrats" inherited from an earlier era were left as potential leaders.<sup>74</sup> Ryvkin seemed to suggest that the mobilizations had taken inordinate numbers of workers, leaving behind students, whom he held responsible for the "bureaucratization" of the Komsomol.

What was the solution, then, to the leadership crisis? The Komsomol leadership could not accept the opposition's proposed "youth specialists" as a way of generating new cadres for the youth movement, the state, and the Party because such specialization would lead to syndicalist notions. Youth syndicalism or separatism stemmed, according to Dunaevskii's detractors, from a basic misconception shared by some activists of youth's role in society: youth have no special interest to set it apart from other social groups.<sup>75</sup> Ironically, Dunaevskii's foes claimed that specialization, as put forth by the opposition, could only be detrimental to the youth movement; but they left the problem of bureaucratization unsolved.<sup>76</sup>

The answer was then to be found in areas other than economic activism, specifically in the Komsomol's political function. According to Bukharin, the League's bureaucratization had its roots in the wide ideological and cultural gap that existed between a fairly politically sophisticated leadership and a backward base. For this reason, he opposed banning students from the Komsomol: bureaucratism was not found exclusively among non-proletarian elements. Bukharin then advised the Komsomol that the only way to eradicate bureaucratism was by raising the cultural and political level of the young masses and offering them the skills and administrative knowledge they needed. This justified his position on the League's social composition--i.e., opposition to those who wanted to limit the Komsomol's membership to "young toilers" (peasants and workers). Tatarov's call for redirecting the League's energies away from external work (i.e., economic work) to internal work (i.e., political education) was basically another version of Bukharin's view.<sup>77</sup>

The opposition had captured and synthesized the major issues

which the Communist youth organization faced in its first four years of existence. The crisis had forced the organization's leadership to redefine the League's social character, its organizational forms, its function within the new state, and its relationship to the Communist Party. Contrary to the portrayal of the opposition by the dominant faction, the dunaevtsy did not posit an exclusively economic vision of the Komsomol's role in society. Economic work was essential to them but mainly as a way of politicizing the rank and file, building support for the League, and teaching youth active participation in Soviet organs. The dunaevtsy shared many of the beliefs voiced by that movement that emerged within the trade unions in 1919 and evolved into the Workers' Opposition the following year. Indeed, though the initial points of contact between them remain unclear, the two currents eventually merged.

Evoking the participatory democracy set forth by Lenin in *State and Revolution*, both dissenting groups saw the trade unions and the proposed youth sections within them as training grounds for popular administrators.<sup>78</sup> In the gradual "withering away of the state," these administrators would replace the alienated bureaucracy inherited from the old order, and thereby guarantee the end of the reproduction of the bureaucratic elite. The Worker's Opposition and the dunaevtsy shared an awareness that Lenin's vision of a truly popular government, as put forth in 1917, had not been realized. Thus, the dunaevtsy spoke out against the growing separation of the Komsomol leadership from the masses of young workers and against using bureaucratic approaches to enforce labor protection. For the dunaevtsy, as for their comrades in the Workers' Opposition, such bureaucratic methods precluded mass participation, the precondition for the construction of communism. Both blamed the surge of bureaucratism on the influx of non-workers, especially of intellectuals and technocrats, into positions of power in the country's economic and political life.<sup>79</sup>

To some extent, the debates within the Komsomol mirrored the situation within the Party. The fall and winter of 1920-1921 marked a period of intense but open discussion within the Party as first the Democratic Opposition and later the Workers' Opposition launched scathing attacks on the Party's machinery. The grievances were similar to those voiced by the League's internal critics: the Party's weak ties with local organizations, poor handling of reassignments of activists, insufficient attention to economic and educational activities, and abusive treatment of internal critics. Yet the process within the Komsomol preceded the Party's crisis and expressed its

own dynamics. The defeat of the *dunaevshchina*, the first serious schism at the national level, signaled the rejection of economic work as a central part of the Komsomol's *raison d'être*. More significant, it signaled the transformation of the Komsomol into a "school of communism" for all Russian youth.

The Komsomol would be allowed to harbor no syndicalist or separatist illusions about its responsibilities to its membership. The practice of labor protection had shown that the Komsomol's self-identification as an advocate of the particular interests of youth was fraught with divisive tensions that eventually challenged the League's structure, its hierarchy, and its relationship to the Party. At a considerable cost to the organization, the initial assumption that the League would play the role of youth advocate was abandoned by the dominant group within the Komsomol leadership by the end of 1920. Economic and educational work were confined to the state's purview; the League was to be, instead, a political organization.<sup>80</sup>

The Party's representatives at the Third Congress tacitly acknowledged that the Komsomol's leadership had defended the line that would ensure the League's integration into the country's political life. This sense of approval permeated the proceedings of the Komsomol's last Civil War Congress. The League's political importance was reflected by Lenin's presence and address to that gathering. Lunacharskii, addressing the delegates, captured the Party's high estimation of the youth organization:

You are the closest cadres to the Communist Party. . . .  
You are no longer children [but] political workers.<sup>81</sup>

## NOTES

1. *Petrogradskaia pravda* (hereafter abbrev. *PP*), 2 March 1920, 4.
2. S. Smith, *Red Petrograd: Revolution in the Factories, 1917-1918* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 199-200.
3. Unsigned article in *Iunyi kommunist* (hereafter abbrev. *IUK*), 15 December 1918, no. I: 2.
4. O. Skar [Ryvkin], "Pochemu nash soiuz Kommunisticheskii?" *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 3.
5. Istomol TsK RKSM, Komissiiia po izucheniu iunosheskogo dvizhenii v Rossii, *Vtoroi s"ezd RKSM: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1924), 2.
6. *Ibid.*, 1.
7. Istomol TsK RLKSM, Komissiiia po istorii iunosheskogo dvizheniia v Rossii, *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1924), 2d ed., 23; V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin, *O molodezhi* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 197.
8. This perception was shared by Komsomol historians of the 1920s: in an introduction to a collection of Party decisions on the Komsomol, the anonymous editor pointed out that "when the struggle unfolded to its fullest dimension, the question of the youth movement was relegated to the back burner." *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 4.
9. Ryvkin, "Pochemu nash soiuz kommunisticheskii?" *IUK*, 1 January 1919, no. II: 3.
10. "Vos'moi s"ezd RKP," TsK RLKSM, *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 24.
11. *PP*, 10 April 1919, 4; N. V. Trushchenko, *Partiia i Komsomol, 1918-1920 gg.* (Gorky: Izd. Gor'kovskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 1966), 92. For the opposite opinion, see A. S. Pedan, *Partiia i Komsomol (1918-1945 gody): istoricheskii ocherk* (Leningrad: Izd. Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1979), 58-60.
12. Iu. Afanas'ev, E. Ia. Remizova, and Z. M. Ivanova, *Ocherki istorii Leningradskoi organizatsii VLKSM* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1969), 57.
13. *Ibid.*, 59.
14. *Ibid.*, 60; Trushchenko, *Partiia i Komsomol*, 90-91. Moscow also recommended that young Party members enter the League and even requested that the League's Moscow Committee allow Party members over twenty years of age to join the Komsomol.
15. *Iunyi proletarii*, (hereafter abbrev. *IUP*), 1 March 1919, no. V: 14.
16. *PP*, 3 April 1919, 4.
17. "Vos'moi s"ezd," 25.
18. *Ibid.*, 26; *PP*, 3 April 1919; Lenin and Stalin, *O molodezhi*, 198; A. Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1928), 64-65.
19. "Vos'moi s"ezd," 25.
20. O. Ryvkin, "Soiuz i Partiia," *IUK*, 20 September 1919, no. XI: 3.
21. Zinoviev, "Zadacha Soiuz Molodezhi," *IUP*, 1 May 1919, no. IX: 4.
22. Aleksei Leont'ev, "Gotovtes' k S"ezdu," *IUP*, 20 August 1919, no. XVI: 2-3; O. Ryvkin, "Soiuz i Partiia," 3-4.
23. *IUK*, 20 September 1919, no. XI: 14; A. Shokhin, *Kratkaia istoriia*, 65-66; *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 27-28; Pedan, *Partiia i Komsomol (1918-1945)*, 59; Ralph T. Fisher, *Pattern for Soviet Youth: A Study of the Congresses of the*



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*Komsomol, 1918-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 13.

24. Ryvkin, "Soiuz i Partiia," 4.
25. *Vtoroi s"ezd RKSM*, 2d ed., 19-20.
26. *Ibid.*, 117.
27. Some districts in Moscow reported that all their members joined the Party after the Second Komsomol Congress. *IUK*, November 1919, no. XV: 22, 35-36; *IUK*, October 1919, no. XIV: 1.
28. "Zametki," *IUK*, 15 October 1919, no. XIII: 11; N. Tatarov, "Na smenu," *PP*, 25 October 1919, 4.
29. *IUP*, February 1920, no. II-III: 14; Averbakh, "Partiia i Soiuz," *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 25 April 1920, 1.
30. "Partiinaia stranichka," *PP*, 27 November 1919, 4.
31. *Smena*, 18 December 1919.
32. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS, *Deviatyi s"ezd RKP (b), mart-aprel' 1920 goda; protokoly* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1960), 345; *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi: stenogrammy i rezoliutsii*, 29.
33. *Deviatyi s"ezd*, 349; *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 30.
34. "TsK RKP o rabote sredi molodezhi," *Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, 1 August 1920, no. VIII: 1.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Robert Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution: A Study in Organizational Change, 1917-1923* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), 106.
37. *Ibid.*
38. V. Dunaevskii, "O nashikh bolezniah," *Iunosheskaia pravda*, August 1920, 2-4; partially reprinted in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, II: 50-53. The *Letopis'* version omitted Dunaevskii's preoccupation with the League's failure to develop a mass following and his insistence on sending youth apprentices to government institutions.
39. *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, II: 49. See Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 336-37; Gail W. Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 63-65.
40. "Itogi plenuma TsK," *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 15 August 1920, 2-3. The plenary session met from 2 to 6 August.
41. "3-i plenum TsK RKSM," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 51-52.
42. The other four presidium members were Shokhin, Feigin, Iakovlev, and Ignat.
43. *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 56.
44. *Ibid.*, 54-56; *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 15 August 1920, 2.
45. Efim Tsetlin, "Trudovoi pod'em i rabochii den' molodezhi," *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 16 May 1920, 3. The article, which tacitly defended Dunaevskii's position on the economic tasks of young workers, had the explicit support of the rest of the editorial board.
46. Major opposition spokesmen included: V. Dalin (Turkistan), V. Feigin (Vladimir), Garaburda (Smolensk), Garber (Kazan), Iakovlev (Caucasus), S. Ignat (Ukraine), Ksenofontov (Simbirsk), Kotikhin (Tersk), A. Leia (Central Committee), Lomakin (Moscow), A. Mil'chakov (Siberia), S. Moiseeva, Malyshev (Volga Region), Okulik (Ukraine), Pen'kov (Central Industrial Region), Polifem (Central Committee), Semenov (Ukraine), Shokhin (N. Novgorod), Starostin, F. Tseitlin (Smolensk), and Zusman. See Dunaevskii's circular letter and Feigin's brief history of the opposition in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 66.

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47. "3-ii plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta," first published in *IUK*, 25 August 1920, no. 15; reprinted in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, No. II: 58-60.
48. Aleksandr Mil'chakov, the highest Komsomol official in the Siberian organization, himself an oppositionist, recalls his reassignment that summer in his memoirs, which he wrote after protracted penal servitude in Stalin's camps. Mil'chakov fails to mention the political reasons behind his reassignment. See his *Pervoe desiatiletie: zapiski veterana Komsomola* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1965), 2d ed., 38-39.
49. *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 54-56; *Iunosheskaia pravda*, 15 August 1920, 2-4.
50. "Tsirkuliar t. Dunaevskogo," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 61.
51. For the introduction of the practice of transfers in the Party see Leonard Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy: Political Opposition in the Soviet State: First Phase, 1917-1922* (New York and Washington, D. C.: Praeger, 1965), 263-65; Robert V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution; Communist Opposition in Soviet Russia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), 113.
52. "Tsirkuliar t. Dunaevskogo," 61-66.
53. "Vsem gubkomam RKP," *Izvestiia TsK RKP (b)*, 18 September 1920, no. 22: 3 reprinted in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 72-74.
54. *Ibid.*, 74.
55. "Tsirkuliar t. Dunaevskogo," 62-63.
56. *Deviati s"ezd RKP*, 349; *S"ezdy RKP o molodezhi*, 30. According to Shatskin only 15 to 20 percent of the League's members were also Party members.
57. Institut Marksizma-Leninizma pri TsK KPSS, *Deviataia konferentsiia RKP (b), sentiabr' 1920 goda. Protokoly* (Moscow: Izd. Politicheskoi Literatury, 1972), 114-15.
58. *Ibid.*, 118.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 89.
62. *Ibid.*, 132.
63. "Postanovlenie plenuma TsK RKP," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 76.
64. See V. Feigin's account of the activities of the Party faction for a breakdown of the different tendencies at the congress in "Fraktsiia III s"ezda," *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 95-107. According to Feigin the Dunaevtsy enjoyed the support of the N. Novgorod, Iaroslav, Penza, Turkestan, Saratov, Orel, most of the Siberian, Muscovite, Smolensk, Bielorrussian, Ukrainian, and part of the Cossack delegations. The editor disagrees with Feigin and claims that they did not constitute solid blocs but concedes that, initially, the Central Committee did not have a majority among the delegates!
65. *Ibid.*, 97.
66. *Ibid.*, 100-102.
67. *Ibid.*, 103.
68. *Ibid.*, 96.
69. Istmol TsK RLKSM, *Tretii vserossiiskii s"ezd RKSM: stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow-Leningrad: Mol. Gvardiia, 1926), 104-23.
70. Feigin, "Fraktsiia," 105.
71. See the letter sent to all provincial and local Komsomol organizations in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 66-72.
72. N. Bukharin, "K otkrytiu vserossiiskogo s"ezda soiuz molodezhi (RKSM)," *Pravda*, 3 October 1920, reprinted in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 83-84.
73. *Tretii vserossiiskii s"ezd*, 84-85, 89.

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74. Ibid., 86-87.

75. Ibid., 123, 129.

76. Tatarov, "O chem idet rech'," *IUK*, 29 September 1920, no. XVII-XVIII, reprinted in *Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, no. II: 81.

77. Ibid.; *Tretii s"ezd*, 35-36, 126-27.

78. V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), 42-44, 64-65. See also Isaac Deutscher, *Soviet Trade Unions: Their Place in Soviet Labor Policy* (London and New York: Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1920), 27; "The Workers' Opposition," *Selected Writings of Aleksandra Kollontai*, trans. Alix Holt (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1977), 162, 193-94.

79. "Workers' Opposition," 163-67.

80. Tatarov, "O chem idet rech'," 81.

81. *Tretii s"ezd*, 22-23. Dunaevskii eventually recanted and was reinstated as a Party member. Thereafter he continued to be active in Komsomol work. See Institut Istorii Partii MGK i MK KPSS, *Ocherki istorii moskovskoi organizatsii VLKSM* (Moscow: Mosk. Rabochii, 1976), 126.

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# Conclusion

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The organized youth movement that emerged in Petrograd's working class districts in 1917 was the product of two contradictory yet interdependent forces. On the one hand, its birth and initial development as a spontaneous mass organization was possible only in a revolutionary context; it was an integral part of the larger workers' movement. It sought to transform the worldview, the political consciousness of its followers, to educate them to be active participants in that movement and, after the Revolution, conscious builders of the new order. Yet the radical youth movement was also the expression of autonomist, potentially "syndicalist" forces within the revolutionary process. The young workers of Vyborg district who conceived the notion of establishing youth cells in their factories did so as a reaction to a workers' movement that was dominated by adult, male, skilled workers who often ignored the specific interests of the young.

The democratization of Russian society following the overthrow of the old regime facilitated the creation of a multitude of grass roots organizations that represented such particular groups as soldiers' wives, unskilled workers, working-class women, and young factory workers, to name only a few. Such groups were responsible for the proliferation of revolutionary organizations in the course of 1917, organizations that articulated the growing radicalization of the working class. At the same time, those particularistic entities imparted to the Revolution its anarchic or chaotic character.

The youth movement's juxtaposition of itself to the adult workers' movement shaped the vision of its role in the workers' state. From its inception the movement defined itself as part of the working



## Conclusion

class and sought to establish the role that the youth organization would play within the workers' state. By the summer of 1917 the youth movement expressed the conviction that an organization representing the interests of young workers would have to develop the means for influencing policy and for guaranteeing the implementation of legislative measures designed to protect those interests. The youth movement committed itself to the militant defense of the Revolution and workers' state, but it desired to pursue its constituents' interests and to organize the defense of the Revolution as a separate, autonomous entity.

The October Revolution and the period of Civil War exacerbated those tensions and, at the same time, forced their resolution. The flower of the youth movement manned the barricades, and later secured the trenches and provided cadres to the new state and the Communist Party. Concurrently, the youth organization demanded a determining voice within the state as an institution that not only represented a specific sector of the working class but which even claimed to be the vanguard of that class. Yet by the end of the period those sectors within the Komsomol that championed the image of militant vanguard had been defeated; the image of vanguard was superseded, first by that of helper in the general armed struggle of the working class and, later, by that of the young reserves of the Communist party.

During the Civil War the Komsomol became an invaluable political ally of the Communist party and indispensable source of loyal personnel for the Soviet state. In the process, the pro-Bolshevik youth movement shed the pluralistic, chaotic, and even anarchic nature that had characterized it in 1917 and became a more disciplined, hierarchical, and externally guided organization. This was achieved at an immense price, as important groups within the local and central leadership, having lost their fight against that trend, became alienated from the organization; many left its ranks in 1921-1922.

While in 1917 the youth league owed its appeal to the particularistic interests of young workers, during the Civil War its survival as a Communist entity depended to a large extent on its ability to play down its separatist strains. In a real sense, the political realities of the Civil War molded that outcome. To guarantee the viability of the Komsomol as a political entity, the leadership had to respond to its political environment: by the end of the Civil War the trend had turned from pluralism and diversity to growing homogeneity

and conformity.

From its earliest days, the youth movement embodied a tension expressed in its affirmation of an autonomous, separate identity within the larger revolutionary movement, and its commitment to the defense of the Revolution. This tension was present in the workers' movement. The organizational ferment of 1917 nourished the pluralistic, separatist tendencies within the larger movement. Yet the dominant sector within the movement, comprised primarily of skilled, male, adult workers, looked upon the segmentation of the struggle into particular groups as divisive and potentially detrimental to the movement. With the outbreak of Civil War, the perceived need for unity against the Revolution's enemies drowned out many pluralistic currents.

After the October Revolution the SSRM and the Komsomol leadership had no doubt that the political imperative was to defend the new regime. In practice, this translated itself into unconditional support for the Communist party and the Soviet state. The enthusiastic participation of the Komsomol in the Red Army and in Party and government work diverted the most devoted and militant cadres away from youth-specific concerns. Paradoxically, that participation, together with the problems of urban depopulation and economic ruin, devastated the base of the once thriving youth organization. As the Party became more dependent on the youth organization for critical support during this period, the youth organization came to rely on the Party for new recruits and for help with material and human resources.

By the end of the Civil War, the Komsomol had become a main source of reserves for the Party. As such, its autonomy was increasingly circumscribed as was its claim to speak for a particular social group. This explains the defeat of the Dunaevskii opposition, for that tendency demanded the creation of a potentially separate power base along generational lines and in opposition to those forces within the Party and the workers' movement that rejected such fragmentation. At the same time, the League had gained the power and political status that allowed it to pursue some specific youth concerns, especially education.

In fact, the Komsomol became primarily an educational institution. Its educational activities, in particular its clubs and factory schools and its involvement in Narkompros's work, allowed the Komsomol to shape the political consciousness and worldviews of its activists and followers. As the Komsomol grew, it would reach

## Conclusion

entire generations of Soviet children and young people through its networks of school clubs and, later, through its sponsorship of the Pioneers, the children's organization. It was precisely through its work within the country's expanding schools system that the Komsomol acquired the mass following it had aspired to have from the beginning. Educational work gave the Komsomol an active role in the selection and training of managers and other personnel for all levels of government and Party positions. It also permitted the League to influence school policy, including staffing and the type of school the Komsomol felt was best suited to the needs of the new society. Finally, educational activities provided Komsomol members a forum for their creative energies.

The Civil War did not eradicate the deep sense of avant-gardism that inspired the youth movement since 1917. Such sentiments blossomed even after 1920 and much of the Komsomol's rhetoric continued to posit youth as more revolutionary than the rest of the working class. Indeed such sentiments were in part responsible for the Komsomol's continued attraction to various opposition currents within the Party throughout the NEP period. But avant-gardism was generally channeled into cultural areas and the arts. It is in this context that we can understand how in the 1980s the Komsomol has sponsored heavy metal rock in Russian cities.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it is also true that the Civil War resulted in the integration of the Komsomol into the Party and state structures, an integration that checked the possibilities for the articulation of separatist or autonomist tendencies within the Komsomol. In the Civil War years the Komsomol emerged as one of the critical institutions of consensus building for the new society. Its main function, that of transforming consciousness, is a central tenet of political activism for Marxists; it thus placed the League in a privileged position in the new state. The new order, communism, could come about only if people's consciousness changed. To bring about that transformation in the new generation was the task of the Communist Youth League. It could not carry out that task if it were to serve as an advocate for a separate group.

## NOTES

1. Bill Keller, "Russia's Restless Youth," *New York Times Magazine*, 26 July 1987, 14-15.





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# Appendixes

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# Appendix 1

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## Trud i svet's Charter and Manifesto<sup>1</sup>

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**Charter** (published on 12 July 1917)

### A. Goals

1. To make young proletarians enlightened citizens and conscious advocates of their rights.

2. To make the future proletarian a scientist [and] specialist in his trade.

3. To develop a striving for organized self-protection in young proletarians in the political, economic, and legal areas.

4. To develop the feeling of personal dignity and class consciousness, [which are] precious to the working class, as youth create their social organization and become enlightened and educated at the technical and professional level.

5. To develop in young proletarians a feeling for excellence and greatness and the striving for the satisfaction of artistic virtues.

6. To raise the physical condition of the future worker and to develop in him the inclination toward rational and healthy entertainment.

7. To unite each and every young proletarian in Russia and to unite him with the young proletarians in the West and in the New World and in other countries [in order to] work toward the creation of world socialism and to struggle jointly against capitalism.

### B. Implementation

To accomplish these goals, the organization, in the persons of its Municipal Council and Executive Youth Committee, will carry out the task of unifying proletarian youth under the slogan Trud i svet



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[Labor and Light] as it guides the social, political, economic, legal, historical-philosophical, scientific education, polytechnical, trade, and professional training of future proletarians, their moral and artistic education, their physical development, and their welfare and protection, in accordance with the plans worked out by the following departments:

- a. School education and enlightenment
- b. Polytechnical and industrial trades training
- c. Self-protection and self-defense of labor
- d. Literary and artistic education and literary publication
- e. Aesthetic development (fine and applied arts)
- f. Physical strengthening and scientific sports entertainment
- g. Domestic science, agricultural science, and housekeeping
- h. Medical-sanitary information
- i. Finances and cooperatives
- j. Union with young peasants
- k. Direction of the organization's affairs

Each department will have a commission to head it.

### C. Form of Organization

1. At the head of all youth organizations stands the Municipal (All-District) Council of Proletarian Youth. It consists of a chairman, co-chairman, secretary, and treasurer of the executive committee of each district, plus three deputies from each district organization--in total, seven members from each district organization, each having a full vote.

2. The Presidium of the Municipal Council is elected by a general, equal, direct, and secret vote by all members of the Municipal Council.

3. At the head of each district is a District Youth Committee, which is elected by a general, equal, direct vote, proportionate to all factories and plants in a given district.

4. In a similar form of voting, the district committee elects from among its members its own youth executive committee for that district.

### D. The Rights of the Municipal [All-District] Council

1. The right to organize and unite all proletarian youth by all possible means.

2. The right to lead and guide the activities of individual

districts through a single channel: under the slogan of work and enlightenment toward the enacted goals.

3. For the sake of coordinating all of the organization's activities, [the council has the right to] confirm each district committee's and each commission's major plans and projects for action.

4. [The right] to judge the honor of the comrades [members].

5. The unlimited right to propose, work out, and implement the tasks already resolved upon by the organization.

6. The right to establish communication with similar foreign organizations, institutions, and all necessary persons.

7. The right to invite needed persons [and grant them] a full vote in the meetings of the Municipal Council on a temporary or permanent basis (the right of cooptation).

8. The right to exclude superfluous or dangerous persons from the Municipal Council.

9. Exclusion from the Municipal Council results from a member's negligence of responsibilities and harmful general behavior at sessions of the Municipal Council and outside of it with relation to the organization.

The reelection of a member of the Municipal Council in the district committee is confirmed by the Municipal Council after hearing the motivating decision of the district committee.

#### E. Membership of the Municipal Council

1. Elected by general, equal, direct, and secret vote or by cooptation by the majority of its members, the members of the Municipal Council have a full vote.

2. They will remain members with full rights in the Council until their exclusion from the Council by resolution, and this is binding for the district committees.

3. No member of the Municipal Council has the right to appear anywhere and give public, written, or verbal declarations without proper authorization from the Municipal Council.

4. Each member of the Municipal Council acts within the limits of the mandate of authority, given at each instance or occasion.

F. The Rights of District Committees

1. The right to work out and implement measures on questions of organization of all young men and women proletarian comrades in their district or subdistrict and on questions of education, enlightenment, self-education, self-development, economic, legal, and political welfare and self-protection. Large scale projects and measures for organized mass activities on questions of self-protection must be presented for inspection and approval of the Municipal Council.

2. The right to invite into the committee useful or needed persons with a full vote on a temporary or permanent basis.

3. The right to exclude from the committee extraneous or dangerous persons.

4. The right to judge the honor of its members.

5. The right to decide conflicts between minors and employers and to settle them.

6. The right to communicate with similar organizations, essential institutions, or all necessary persons. For the sake of a fully integrated, comprehensive consolidation and implementation of common goals and of cultural-political tasks each district committee is charged with presenting all plans and projects, matters and measures, which do not have merely a local or district character, but also a more general, citywide, Russian, or even a general proletarian character for approval by the Municipal Council.

7. The right to have its own printing press, forms, envelopes, and banner, movable, and immovable property. But for the sake of the organization's fraternal unity and the solidarity in strength of the future proletariat, each district and subdistrict committee is charged with the duty to designate (itself) everywhere as the "Proletarian Youth Organization Trud i svet."

It must be understood and accepted that, [irrespective of] the party to which the young woman or young man belongs, it is all part of one front: that party, personal happiness, the happiness of the country, and the happiness of the world proletariat may and should be strengthened only through a powerful proletarian organization, fused by creative work and the impartial light of science which opens, clarifies, and guides everything toward a single goal: the beauty of life.

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### G. Members of the District Committees

1. The chairman, co-chairman, and treasurer of the Executive Committee, as members of the Municipal Council, abide by section F.
2. So do the three deputy members.
3. The rest must abide by those rules and instructions worked out and upheld by the district committee.

### H. Administration of the Organization's Affairs

1. The main responsibility for the management of the organization's affairs rests with the Presidium of the Municipal Council and in the districts, in the Executive Committee of each district.
2. The Presidium of the Municipal Council includes the chairman, two co-chairmen, the Presidium secretary, the manager, the Council secretary, and the clerk. All are elected by a general, equal, direct, secret vote.
3. The Presidium of the Municipal Council acts in accordance with the Charter and to the "Instructions for the Direction of the Organization's Affairs." See the Supplement.

### I. The Members of the Organization Trud i svet

1. The organization consists of the following members: cooperating, active, and emulating members, without distinctions of sex, background, or faith.
2. Cooperating members can be of any age; they can be coopted either by the All-District Council or by the district committees in agreement with the All-District Council upon reporting to it in the capacity of a full-right member of the All-District Council or of the Executive Committee for special organizational work or for cultural-educational work useful to young workers.
3. Everyone who is under twenty-one years of age can be an active member. Active members have a full vote.
4. An emulating member can be any person of any age and such a member has an advisory vote.
5. Active members are obliged to pay a one-time 50-kopek membership due and a monthly due proportionate to their income to the cashier in the All-District Council or to the district committee.
6. Failure to pay dues for two months will result in exclusion.
7. Cooperating members and emulating members are exempted from dues.



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8. Cooperating members and active members have the right to attend all organization facilities and all lectures, concerts, meetings and parties given by the All-District Council or by the district executive committees free of charge.

### J. The Organization's Finances

1. Income consists of initial membership fees, mandatory for active and cooperating members, tithes from salaries, donations for the benefit of the organization, profits from trips, shows, concerts, etc., [and] proceeds from the sale of literature published by the Council.

2. All sums received by the district are kept by the treasurer under his responsibility and accountability.

3. All sums received by the All-District Council are kept by the Chair of the Finance Department and are his responsibility.

4. The All-District Council receives: 1) all procurements from profit-making undertakings and 2) [all funds] allotted to it in the instructions of the district executive committees in agreement with the All-District Council.

5. For extraordinary expenses, the All-District Council asks the district executive committees for the necessary sum. This is distributed proportionately among all districts [and] must be seen as an obligation for all [district] committees.

6. The procedure for saving or spending the sums found at the disposal of the Soviet are defined as follows: for large expenditures up to 500 rubles, the All-District Council [decides], and for smaller [sums], the Presidium [decides], and in special circumstances one representative and one of the comrade representatives [decides] by agreement.

### K. General Conditions

1. All decisions of the All-District Council must be approved by majority vote.

2. A gathering is considered plenipotentiary if no fewer than half of its members are present in cases where the meeting is extraordinary or special, and, if no fewer than two-thirds of all the All-District Council members are present if the gathering is a regular meeting.

3. All decisions of the All-District Council are considered final if they are signed by the majority of the Presidium and a

majority of members present at the meeting.

4. All decisions are binding for each district member of the organization.

5. The All-District Council, in the person of its Presidium, is obliged to publish every year an account of its activities. The district executive committees have to publish monthly news, two copies of which must be filed with the All-District Council as vouchers for the year's account.

6. The Presidium of the All-District Council decides all administrative, organizational, economic, and petty questions.

7. The organization's tasks are planned, worked out and implemented by the All-District Council in the person of its presidium and individual commissions, on the basis of the Council's decisions.

8. For the Council's tasks, see Part A.

9. To change the charter, no fewer than three-quarters of the All-District Council members must meet at a given time.

#### L. Special Condition

1. During sessions of the All-District Council members must refrain from party affiliation, respect the opinion of each speaker, observe the order of speeches [as agreed], [show] no concern for parties or persons without special approval from the All-district Council chairman at each instance, and submit himself/herself unconditionally to the majority.

2. Failure to observe number 1 will be seen as an obstruction.

3. Insubordination by the chair as to the demands of the majority will be considered liquidationism.

4. A member found guilty of this will be excluded from the Council for a few meetings the first time, and permanently on the second infraction.

5. Concerning decisions already taken, to keep inviolable unity, firm solidarity and not to leave a post in the All-District Council without notifying the Council of plots and intrigues by personal or party enemies until investigation of the matter.

6. In unity there is strength.

Every victory rests in organization but organization, above all, in spiritual unity and in principle.

Righteousness and self-sacrifice for the sake of the idea in order that the future proletarian brother [be] free and all-powerful:

this is what should guide the actions and move the intelligence and conscience of each deputy-comrade.

M. Individual Commissions

1. At the head of each department within the All-district Council there is a separate commission that fulfills the tasks defined by the All-District Council or its Presidium.

2. Individual commissions consist of a chair, a co-chair, a secretary with a clerk, and some members.

3. The chair, co-chair, and secretary are appointed by the All-District Council either from within itself or from the membership at large.

4. The management of some departments may be entrusted not to a collegial commission but to a separate member of the All-District Council, to whom is granted the right to have [for] aides either members of the All-District Council, or members of the district committees or a member of the organization [at large] with a deciding vote.

5. Each commission can be changed after a period prescribed by the All-District Council.

6. The chair, co-chair, and presidium secretary can attend all Commission meetings and have a full vote.

7. Other members of the All-District Council and coopted members can participate in commission meetings with a consulting vote.

8. Separate commissions meet as needed. At their meetings the chair of the All-District Council or the chair of the particular commission can invite people they deem useful [and grant them] a consulting vote.

9. All questions before the commission are decided by majority vote, but all projects, decisions, measures, and plans must be considered and upheld by the All-District Council.

Especially:

10. The Commission for the management of the organization's affairs is responsible for the premises of the All-District Council, its offices, all clerical work, the correctness of its conduct, its property and archives, and for the orderliness in the premises of the All-District Council.

11. The management commission gives each member a membership card with a sequential number, a fixed quota, and a date

of membership into the organization.

N. Payment for Courses in the Organization's Institutions

1. For the right to take classes in any of the member institutions or to participate in the sports club all members must pay a sum determined by the All-District Council or by the district committees either on an annual or semi-annual basis.

2. Educational courses are paid for at the time of registration as worked out by the corresponding commission and approved by the All-District Council or district executive committee.

3. Part of the proceeds must go to the All-District Council cashier in agreement with the district executive committee.

4. Fees for the use of individual institutions or buildings are determined by the district executive committee.

O. Collection of Contributions for the Use of the Organization

1. The collection of contributions to be used by the organization should be [done at] the local, district, factory, and plant [levels] for the development of a given department or institution of the organization, at the all-city level for that same goal, at the all-Russian [level] for the use of the organization as a whole.

2. A day of collection is worked out by the All-District Council's Presidium. The collection is to be carried out throughout the city or at the national level through public or organized means.

3. Separate commissions or the district executive committees work out the day for fund-raising if the collection is to be done at the local or district level.

4. To prevent interferences with general fund-raisers, no one has the right to organize a fund-raiser without the approval of the All-District Council.

P. Cessation of Organizational Activities

1. The activities of the organization may be ended and its property liquidated if resolved by a "special session of the All-District Council of Proletarian Youth."

2. At this meeting no fewer than three-quarters of All-District Council members and no fewer than two-thirds of the district executive committee members must be present.



**Manifesto**  
**Of the All-District Council of the Petrograd Proletarian**  
**Youth Organization Trud i svet**

Young Proletarian Comrades:

Tsarism has been overthrown, capitalism is toppling, and the bourgeoisie is trembling. Let our mothers and fathers concern themselves with the final victory over them!

We, future citizens, continuers of our fathers' and mothers' pursuit, and heirs to hard-fought rights and cultural wealth, remember the inexorable historical law [that] wipes off the face of the earth all the backward, uncivilized nations.

We, the All-District Council of Proletarian Youth, bearing in mind this cruel but just historical law, have united, by the duty of future citizens, by the duty of conscience, to be your representatives, to strengthen the posts won by the Revolution through work and light, because creative work and the impartial light of science have been and will be the sole everlasting base of life, on which all that is best in humanity, all of human culture, is founded.

The real invincibility of the proletariat lies in organized labor and organized education; for that reason, we, the All-District Council of Petrograd's Proletarian Youth, recognize that the eternal shield and eternal sword of the proletariat's freedom, truth and creativity is all-powerful labor and the impartial light of science, which open all and point the way to one goal: the beauty of life.

At present we can and must work and learn: we must and can be enlightened citizens and workers-masters and artists in all pursuits, so as to equal our Western brothers. For these reasons, we, the All-District Council of Petrograd's Proletarian Youth, proclaim:

Proletarian Youth, raise the banner of labor and light!

We call on all young men and women comrades to labor and self-enlightenment, and also to be ready to rise at the first call of the Proletarian father, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and to be the first to man the barricades, should we need to deal a final blow to the remnants of infamous tsarism or to the schemes of callous capitalism.

At present, we, the All-District Council of Petrograd's proletarian youth, declare that our activities go forward and will

continue to do so under the slogan of "labor and light," so as to raise and develop in the ranks of young proletarians independence in relation to [youth's] historical, natural, legal, political-economic [rights], technical, trade and professional education, intellectual, moral and artistic education, physical development, and in every possible way, self-protection and prosperity, both in economic and legal terms.

For these reasons, we, the All-District Council of Petrograd's Proletarian Youth, in order to attain these, declare our most pressing tasks to be:

1. the creation of the greatest number possible of grammar schools;

2. the establishment of a free university for proletarian youth;

3. the establishment of a home for labor and self-protection for young workers;

4. the creation of a politechnical and industrial trade academy where young workers may master all specialties;

5. the founding of community schools (summer rest colonies) for the agricultural sciences; schools for medical and health sciences for the proper care of dwellings, health and children; of a school for the domestic arts (for girls); and a professional-trade school for proletarian girls;

6. the founding of a literary school for proletarian youth with printing facilities for the publication of their own periodical organs: the newspaper *Golos molodogo proletariata* and the journal *Trud i svet* and for the dissemination among young proletarians the greatest possible number of inexpensive books and brochures of a scientific and literary-artistic character;

7. the creation of an art school for proletarian youth for the development in them of feelings for what is beautiful; for love of what is graceful; and for the striving towards the entertainment of lofty feelings;

8. the creation of their own young proletarian theater with a hall for meetings and concerts;

9. the construction of a club for water, track, sports, and gymnastic events;

10. and the organization of trips out of town and abroad.

On these beginnings and foundation, we, the All-District Council of Petrograd's Proletarian Youth, declare our sacred goal to be the unification of all young proletarians of Russia in order to fulfill

## Appendix 1

fully and in all ways the general goals and cultural and political tasks.

Proletarian father, your duty consists of giving the proletarian son the torch of all-powerful science and the diploma of a master-worker.

Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, socialist ministers, youth duty is to support the Fatherland's future proletariat with your moral authority and your material power.

Young women and men comrades, we call on you to join promptly and rally around the district youth committees.

May darkness dispel: hail the enlightenment!

We are the bearers of a new epoch!

Young spring is with us!

Protected by countless banners....!

Each young man and woman comrade elected by his or her district youth committee must consider his or her duty to know this Manifesto, to read it to his or her constituents and to disseminate it in the districts, and report the results to the All-District Council.

Chairman, Peter Shevtsov  
Co-chairman, G. Driazgov, A. Burmistrov  
Secretary, Aleksei Sokolov

# Appendix 2

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## Charter and Program of the Socialist Youth League, Narva District (Spring 1917)<sup>2</sup>

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### Charter

1. Membership in the Socialist Youth League is open to anyone between the ages of 13 and 18 who works at a factory or industry and who accepts the program and charter of the Socialist Youth League.

2. Religious beliefs cannot be taken into account when considering someone for membership in the League.

3. League members can be members of any political party (except for bourgeois parties).

4. Members are taken into the League upon the recommendation of another member of any political party or of the League.

5. Parents' or guardians' permission is not required for admission to the League.

6. The organ of authority is the general youth meeting or conference, which convenes no less than once per month and which is considered plenipotentiary with the attendance of over half of its members.

7. The general meeting elects an organizational bureau for a three-month term, gives it guiding directives, hears its reports and accounts, and judges all questions including internal (i.e., pertaining to the League) as well as general political ones.

### The Organizational Bureau

It is elected for three months. It guides all current work, calls general meetings, and fulfills its tasks and resolutions. It manages financial affairs for the League and renders account to the general meeting.



## **Appendix 2**

### **Program of the Socialist League of Young Workers**

#### **Political Demands**

1. The granting of civil rights [equal to those of] adults to everyone over eighteen years of age as well as the right to vote in the Constituent Assembly.

2. Equal civil rights for men and women.

3. Compulsory universal and free education and admission to all levels of school education.

4. The right of minors to elect their representatives to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

#### **Economic Demands**

1. The eight-hour day for all workers.

2. The six-hour day for youths under eighteen.

3. The prohibition of night work for minors.

4. The prohibition of the exploitation of minors under sixteen and, in general, of child labor.

5. The right to elect youth representatives to factory committees and to other organizations from among factory youth, and to pay these representatives for the time they spend on organizational duties.

# Appendix 3

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## Program and Charter of the Socialist League of Young Workers (SSRM)<sup>3</sup>

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### I. The League's Goals

The Socialist League of Young Workers sets as its goals:

1. To develop its members' class consciousness, to raise their cultural level, and, at the same time, to prepare them for the struggle for Socialism.
2. To protect the economic, political, and legal interests of young workers.

### II. Means for Attaining the Established Goals

For Point 1:

- a. To set up members' meetings as well as [meetings] of young workers in general from a given district to judge all questions pertaining to working life.
- b. To set up systematic and separate lectures and discussions on questions dealing with general education, politics, and current events.
- c. To set up courses and schools and diverse lectures on the natural sciences and the arts.
- d. To establish libraries and reading rooms in order to disseminate socialist literature among youth.
- e. To publish lists and appeals to young workers [and] to print brochures and periodicals.
- f. To set up walks, excursions, visits to museums, exhibits, sightseeing, etc.
- g. To establish sports circles and schools for physical development.

### Appendix 3

For Point 2:

a. To create a special commission to investigate minors in the work force.

b. To work out legal projects aimed at improving the economic and political rights of young workers as follows:

1. The prohibition of employment of youths under the age of sixteen.

2. The introduction of government-funded universal obligatory education for children up to age sixteen.

3. The reduction of the work day for youths under the age of eighteen to six hours.

4. The prohibition of employment for youth under eighteen in jobs which doctors declare to be harmful to the health of young bodies.

5. The full ban of night work for youths under eighteen.

6. The establishment of a minimum wage and insurance for work-related illness, unemployment, etc.

7. Laws to protect working minors (under sixteen) prior to full removal from the work force.

8. The recognition of all political and civil rights of eighteen year olds.

These projects will be introduced in the appropriate institutions.

c. To secure the recognition before trade unions of special commissions with representation from the Socialist League of Young Workers to resolve conflicts between young workers and employers, to guide the strike movement, and to make provisions for cases of illness, unemployment, etc., involving youths.

d. To organize demonstrations and other activities of young workers.

### III. The League's Composition

1. The Socialist League of Young Workers will admit all persons up to the age of twenty-one who accept the League's program and charter.

2. Members are subdivided into active and passive. All members over twenty-one wishing to remain in the League shall be

### Appendix 3

considered active. Passive members pay membership dues and enjoy all the rights of active members with the exception of the right to vote in general meetings.

3. Upon joining the League, the members will pay an admissions due of fifty kopeks and a monthly due of one-half of a percent of his earnings.

4. The exclusion of a member from the League may stem from a decision taken by a general meeting. The exclusion of members from the League may be a consequence of improper behavior or acts that go against the League's charter.

5. A League member who fails to pay his membership dues in the course of three months without valid reason (such as illness, unemployment, etc.) will be considered to have withdrawn. His acceptance to the League's membership will follow the same procedure as that for all new members in general.

#### IV. The League's Government

6. The League's highest organ is the general meeting.

7. General meetings will be both regular and extraordinary. Regular meetings will be called once each month. Extraordinary general meetings will be called upon the resolution of the board, the Inspection Commission, or upon the demand by one-tenth of the League's members. In the latter case, the board is obliged to call a general meeting within a seven day period.

*Note:* If in the course of the said period the board does not take steps towards the convocation of a general meeting, the members demanding such a meeting have the right to call it themselves.

8. A general meeting will be considered legitimate with the attendance of one-third of the League's members.

*Note:* If a general meeting is not called because of the absence of the required number of members, a second meeting will be called and considered legitimate regardless of the number of members present.

9. A general meeting examines and judges all the most important questions regarding the League, hears reports and accounts by the board, the Inspection Commission, and representatives to the all-city center, to conferences, etc.

10. All matters before general meetings shall be decided by a simple majority vote.

11. The chairman of each general meeting shall be elected each



### **Appendix 3**

time by the [participants in the] general gathering.

#### **V. The Board**

12. The board will be elected for three months by the general meeting by means of a secret vote.

13. The board members themselves will elect the board's chairman, secretary, treasurer, and their assistants.

14. The board shall meet at least once a week. It acts as the League's official representative and directs its work. Upon the expiration of its plenary powers it will present an account of its activities before a general meeting.

15. All Board members work without pay. Exceptions may be made by the secretary.

16. In those districts in which the circumstances demand it, parallel boards and delegate gatherings will operate. The means of electing, of rights and obligations, of the delegate meetings shall be defined by the district organization.

#### **VI. The League's Resources**

The League's resources consist of admission and membership dues, of income from lectures, events, and so on, from literature published by the League, from donations, special subscriptions, collections in the factories, etc.

#### **VII. Inspection of the League's Affairs**

17. To inspect the League's affairs, an Inspection Commission will be elected by the general meeting by a secret ballot for a three month term.

18. The Inspection Commission is obligated to inspect the board's affairs and the treasury at least once a month, and upon the expiration of its plenipotentiary term it must present an account before a general meeting.

19. Members of the Inspection Commission are obligated to attend board meetings and to use their consulting rights in them.

### Charter of the Socialist League of Young Workers

1. The Socialist League of Young Workers unites all existing leagues of young workers in the city that accept the program and charter adopted at the First Conference of Young Workers held from 18 to 28 August 1917.

2. Without waiting for the creation of an All-Russian League of Young Workers, the Socialist League of Young Workers of Petrograd will join the Youth International.

3. The League is broken up into autonomous district and subdistrict organizations.

*Note:* Exception: the creation of national sections will be allowed and they will act in accordance with the same principle governing the district organizations.

4. Each district and subdistrict organization is required to follow the charter worked out by the First Conference for the entire city.

5. The highest League organ is the all-city conference, which is called on the basis of proportional representation of district, sub-district, and national organizations.

*Note:* The norm for representation is determined by the League's Petersburg Committee.

6. The Conference hears reports and accounts from the Petersburg Committee, judges the most important and principal questions in the League's life and activities, and in accordance with them, makes decisions that are binding to all, amends the League's programs and charter, and carries out elections.

7. Conferences are regularly scheduled or extraordinary. The Petersburg Committee calls regular conferences every three months; extraordinary ones are called upon the initiative of the Petersburg Committee, upon the unanimous demand of the Inspection Commission, or upon the demands of the district organizations, consisting of at least half of the League's membership.

*Note:* The number of district organizations should be no fewer than two.

8. Questions about changes or additions to the program and charter may be judged by the Conference only in the case when the organization or individual League members presenting those changes inform the Petersburg Committee about it two weeks before the Conference.

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9. For ideological guidance regarding all League affairs, the Petersburg Committee is elected.

10. The Petrograd Committee consists of eleven persons elected at the All-City Conference, and of representatives delegated by the district, subdistrict, and national organizations on the following basis: organizations comprising up to two hundred members shall send one [delegate]; from two hundred to five hundred, two [delegates]; over five hundred, one delegate for each five hundred members.

*Note:* The plenipotentiary period for the Petrograd Committee is three months.

11. The Petrograd Committee meets regularly every two weeks [and] makes decisions on all of the League's current issues. It prints lists, brochures, etc., elects the organ's editorial board, confirms new organizations, and elects from among its members an Inspection Commission numbering nine to fifteen persons for the period during which it has plenipotentiary powers.

12. The Inspection Commission enacts all Petrograd Committee resolutions and those of the all-city conference, provides lecturers and propaganda forces to all districts, sets the foundation for new organizations in those districts that have none, organizes lectures, papers, meetings, etc., events of a citywide character, manages the League's funds, calls Petrograd Committee meetings, establishes relations with workers' organizations both in Petersburg and in other cities, with the aim of coordinating the activities and relations with organizations of young workers in other countries.

13. The League's resources consist of 25 percent of the general monies of all member district, subdistrict, and national organizations, from income from lectures, papers, and parties organized by the League, from special collections and donations, from published literature, etc.

14. For the inspection of the League's affairs, the Conference elects an Inspection Commission of five persons and three candidates for a period of three months.

# Appendix 4

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## Program and Charter of the Communist Youth League, 1918<sup>4</sup>

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### Basic Theses

1. The League is solidary with the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). The League has as its goal the dissemination of the ideals of Communism and the integration of young workers and peasants into the active construction of Soviet Russia.
2. The League is an independent organization.
3. The League calls itself the Russian Communist Youth League.

### Program

The capitalist system is on the eve of its own destruction. The rising world proletariat is promoting new social forms. Communist ideas are beginning to come to life. A new world is replacing economic, political, and spiritual slavery--a world of free labor and thought.

Youth, as the most active and revolutionary part of the working class, is the vanguard of the proletarian revolution. Waging from its very childhood a struggle for existence, deprived of the joys of life, youths in working class quarters are full of hatred for capitalism and are ready to struggle for the liberation of the proletariat.

The power of the working class resides in its ability to organize. And working class youth, as its vanguard, constructs its leagues, based on the principle of full autonomy. In these leagues, youth must be imbued with the ideas of Communism, go through the school of revolutionary struggle, and build the new proletarian culture.

The Communist Youth League organizes itself in order to unite the revolutionary youth of Russia. It is one of the columns of the youth International.



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In its goal of developing initiative of action among youth, the League, a fully independent organization, is solidary with the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). To maintain its own independence, work with other workers' organizations hand in hand, and with them go on the path toward creative Communism--this is the tactic of the Russian Communist Youth League.

### Goals

The Russian Communist Youth League has the following goals:

1. To propagandize widely Communist ideas among young workers and peasants.
2. The active participation of youth in the revolutionary construction of Soviet Russia and the creation of new forms of life.
3. The dissemination of the principles of the proletarian world-view and culture among young workers and peasants and their transformation into steadfast, conscious warriors for proletarian ideals.
4. The protection of the legal and economic interests of youth.
5. To propagandize among young workers of all countries the ideas of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the creation of the Communist Youth International.

### League Activities

To attain its goals the Russian Communist Youth League:

1. organizes meetings, rallies, and demonstrations of youth;
2. publishes newspapers, journals, brochures, appeals, and other literature to propagandize its ideals and elucidate the life of youth.
3. establishes courses, schools, universities, and workshops in which youth can develop themselves and build the new culture;
4. organizes under the League's clubs, reading rooms, and diverse circles, where youth may gather together and learn about the organization;
5. disseminates widely sport and military education among youth and establishes suitable organizations;
6. elaborates and facilitates the promulgation of laws that improve the situation of youth;
7. with the aim of protecting the interests of youth, the League

participates in diverse government and workers' organizations both at the center and local levels;

8. establishes contact with foreign youth organizations and participates in the convocation of the International Youth Congress.

9. Taking into account the special conditions of rural life, the League carries out its work in the following manner: it a) unites the young rural poor and develops their class consciousness, b) forges indissoluble links between young proletarians in the city and country, c) propagandizes the ideals of a Communist economy and the organization of work communes.

## CHARTER

1. Any person twenty-three years of age or younger can be a member of the Communist Youth League if he/she accepts the League's program and charter, joins one of its organizations, obeys its decisions, and pays membership dues.

2. New members must be confirmed by a general organizational meeting; up to that point, they shall be considered candidates and will not have membership cards. The issue of recommendations is decided by the local organizations.

3. The local organizations establish monthly dues. The admission dues is 50 kopeks.

*Note to Point 1:* League members who have reached twenty-three years of age may remain in the organization as passive members thereafter--i.e., without voting rights--if the general meeting elects a passive member to one of the League's governing organs, then he receives full voting rights.

Expulsions may be appealed by a decision of a committee of the Central Committee.

## Organizational Structure

1. The highest organ of the Communist Youth League is the All-Russian Congress, which meets at least once a year.

*Note:* Extraordinary congresses can be called at the initiative of the Central Committee or at the request of one-fifth of the guberniia committees.

2. The All-Russian Congress elects a central committee of fifteen members and seven candidates.

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3. The Central Committee is the League's highest organ in the period between congresses.

4. The Central Committee's income consists of 10 percent of all membership fees paid to each organization, of government subsidies, of publications, etc.

5. In order to systematize work and establish ties with the center, regional [oblast'], and provincial [guberniia] leagues are created.

6. The regional committee directs work at the regional level; it is elected at the regional congress. Provincial work is directed by provincial committees.

7. The regional committee serves as a link between the Central Committee and the provincial committees.

8. The work of the regional committee is guided by the instructions of the Central Committee; that of the provincial committee, by the instructions of the regional committees.

9. The provincial committee submits a monthly report to the regional and central committees.

10. Financial questions of the provincial committee are decided at provincial congresses; regional questions are decided at regional congresses.

11. The highest organ of each individual organization is the general members' meeting or the citywide conference.

12. The work of each organization sends delegates to the Department of Labor Protection, Proletkul't, and the Committees of Poor Peasants.

13. Each organization sends delegates to the Department of Labor Protection, Proletkul't, and the Committees of Poor Peasants.

14. The Central Committee is authorized to obtain the right to participate in the meetings of the [local] executive committees with consultative vote at all times.

#### Finances

1. Government subsidy of the League will be carried out through the corresponding organs.

2. The First Congress of Young Workers and Peasants requests a subsidy for the League's organizations from the Commissariat of Enlightenment.

3. Each organization will work out an estimate and submit it before the corresponding local department. Only in the event of

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unsatisfactory estimates or other misunderstandings will the budget be sent to the Central Committee.





# Appendix 5

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## Program and Charter of the Communist Youth League, 1920<sup>5</sup>

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### The League's Goals and Tasks

1. Human society has entered a period of destructive wars and deep change. The old order, which ruled throughout the entire world, and which was based on the subjugation and exploitation of hundreds of millions of workers and peasants by a handful of millionaire-bankers, industrialists, and landlords is collapsing and crumbling to dust. This order, whose name is capitalism, developed and moved under the impulse of capitalist thirst, in pursuit of profit and gain. The pursuit of profits led to large economic unions whose governments plundered the entire world, placing it under the iron heel of international capital. The thirst for gains, the urge to rule, the struggle for the distribution of the world--for African, Asian, Australian, and American colonies--led to the monstrous four-year war of the capitalists, which they waged through their deceived hired hands. In this war the capitalists killed millions of the best workers, destroyed the best among youth, and turned tens of millions into cripples and mutilated people. The war devoured great wealth, destroyed transportation, ploughed grenades in the earth, destroyed cattle, infected humanity with vile illnesses, turned people into beggars, counting their pitiful bread crumbs. It visited upon the working class the inhuman torments of hunger, cold, and epidemics. This ominous picture of destruction threatens all of humanity. Yet, despite this, once again the hungry capitalist states are preparing for world war, arming themselves again, and, once more, they are rattling their weapons, counting on the submissiveness of the working class, hoping to control it and deceive it again. Under such conditions it is clear that to leave power in the hands of the capitalists means to doom all of humanity to inevitable destruction and ruin. And there

is only one class that is sufficiently strong, organized and conscious to realize that task: the proletariat, the working class.

2. The working class can fulfill the heroic task of saving humanity only in the event that, under the leadership of its Communist Party, it destroys the bourgeois state and organizes its own power, its dictatorship, with the help of which it will deprive the bourgeoisie of its wealth, destroy the bourgeoisie's opposition, and lay the foundations for a new society, where humanity will be united and in harmony, a great working artel, without masters or rulers, without landlords or capitalists, where it will work for itself, where each will be given the space to develop his talents and strengths. The working class can buy the realization of this high-minded and inevitable task only at the cost of selfless struggle, of the greatest heroism, of preparedness for sacrifice, suffering, and hardships which are demanded by the great struggle against capitalism.

3. Not just one generation of workers will fight in this struggle. The world Communist revolution, spreading from country to country, will be realized decisively only in the course of decades. And before the working class, which raises the rebellious banner against capitalism, stands the task of preparing its reserves which will integrate themselves in the ranks of warriors for Communism. Working class youth, who under capitalism were barbarously exploited in the factories, systematically deceived, and spiritually destroyed in bourgeois schools and churches, cruelly destroyed in order to serve the goals of profit in the bloody battlefields, will serve as the reserves [of the working class]. From the entrails of proletarian youth derive the cadres of young and fresh warriors who will overthrow capitalism.

4. In the Russian Soviet Republic state power already finds itself in the hands of the working class, and before it stand the tasks of strengthening this power, defending it from international embezzlers, the struggle for world revolution, and on the other hand, the selfless construction of a new economy from that chaos and wreckage that the proletariat inherited. Therefore, young workers, the flesh and blood of the working class, must struggle actively both at the war front against capitalism, and at the front against economic ruin. The protection of the new forms of socialist life, the creation of new working conditions for young workers, their re-education, as well as that of young peasants in the Communist spirit, the preparation of cadres of builders of the Communist society, the

making of a generation that is powerful and healthy physically and spiritually, these are main tasks before young workers.

### **The Russian Communist Youth League and Its Organization**

5. The independent action of youth is the basis of its revolutionary education. The necessity to teach young workers independent action through their organization, initiative, and the resolution of the complex questions facing Communist construction, as well as age-related particularities, and the presence of special tasks in the areas of labor and education set apart the existence of special youth organizations.

6. The Russian Communist Youth League is the sole mass organization of youth in the RSFSR [Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic], uniting youth of all nationalities in one fraternal family. Under its banner the Russian Communist Youth League unites the broad masses of young proletarians and peasants, also taking into its ranks the best and most active part of those young intellectuals who have come over to Communism.

7. The basic task of the Komsomol is the Communist education of young workers in which theoretical training is closely tied to active participation in the life, work, struggle, and construction of the laboring classes. All of the RKSM's practical work in all areas must be subordinated to the task of educating youth in Communism, [thereby] preparing energetic and brave builders of the socialist economy, defenders of the Soviet Republic, [and] organizers of the new society.

8. The youth movement is part of the general proletarian Communist movement, which has as its goal the destruction of the old capitalist world and the organization of the socialist society.

The Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) is the leader and guide of the proletarian revolution and the Soviet republic. The Russian Communist Youth League recognizes the program and tactics of the RCP and, discussing the general issues of the life of the Soviet republic, it subordinates itself to its political directives. Working under its control, it [remains] an autonomous organization. The Central Committee of the Komsomol is directly subordinate to the Central Committee of the RCP (Russian Communist Party).

9. The Komsomol has its own centralized higher and lower organization (the governing organs are elected by the League itself), which autonomously define the methods to be used in its agitational,



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propaganda, and organizational work, and the forms of its participation in the areas of socialist construction which affect the labor and education of youth.

10. The solution of questions related to the labor and education of youth, which has great importance for the life of the entire working class and its proletarian state. The legislative measures which the Soviet government takes to improve the situation of laboring youth are carried out through the state's technical apparatus. The Komsomol takes part in the discussions of the main questions concerning youth, proposes new measures in that area, looks after the enforcement of published decisions, gives activists and sends representatives to government organs, and helps them with the resources of its own organizational apparatus.

11. The Communist youth organizations of all countries are united within the Communist Youth International--the militant staff that guides the struggle of the world's young workers and peasants and which is a part of the Third Communist International. The Komsomol is the vanguard of the international army of young proletarians, which works in the most favorable conditions [under] the dictatorship of the proletariat, participating actively in the struggle and work of the Communist Party, and in every possible way helping the oppressed fraternal organizations in the West and the East.

### **The Komsomol's Political-Educational Work**

1. Political education is the foundation of all Komsomol activity. Creating in its members an integrated Communist world-view, the League trains warriors who are equipped with comprehensive knowledge and builders of Communism. While preparing within its ranks new proletarian scientists and cultural workers, the Komsomol creates the ground for the powerful development of proletarian culture. The League's political-educational work is the prerequisite for successful work in all other areas and the most valuable element of internal unity among its members.

2. The illiteracy of the majority of laborers constitutes a basic obstacle to the construction of socialist society. The eradication of illiteracy among League members and among all youth, as well as assistance to government organs in the propagation of literacy among the adult population constitutes the first militant tasks of the Komsomol.

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3. By means of broadly organized mass agitation on behalf of communist ideals among laboring youth, the League constantly informs them of current events within the Soviet republic and helps the RCP with its agitational work.

4. The Komsomol considers it obligatory for all its members to go through a definite course of political education which encompasses the foundations of social structure, the history of the Revolution and its essence, the tasks and policies of the Soviet state and the Communist Party.

5. Training its members to be conscious Communists, the Komsomol strives to refrain from the superficial mastering of bare political slogans and disseminates among its members real knowledge in all the sciences that we have inherited from the prior development of human culture. Together with this, the Komsomol carries out an ideological struggle against the religious plague which corrodes the young generations of laborers and which helps the representatives of the overthrown bourgeoisie deceive the people.

6. The ignorance of peasant youth, implanted in the course of centuries of the tsarist regime, compels the Komsomol to pay special attention to political education in the countryside. [Such work will be done by] subordinating cultural-educational youth circles and reorganizing them into League cells, using the teachers and organs of extracurricular and agricultural education. The League's work methods in the countryside must be adapted to the special living conditions of young peasants (the mentality of small proprietors, the strong influence of priests and kulaks, the parents' conservatism, etc.).

7. The Komsomol carries out political education among the different nationalities living in the RSFSR in their own languages, adapting it to the special historical and cultural situation, and organizing, where needed, special organs for agitation and propaganda among one or another nationality.

8. The League's political-educational work is carried out through: a) the youth press, which sheds light on youth's life and the youth movement, and in which the broad masses of young workers and peasants are drawn in to take part; b) League clubs that offer political, literary, drama, music, art, current events, and other circles; trips to museums, galleries, etc.; c) lectures, courses, talks, libraries, League reading rooms, cottage reading rooms with a careful selection of books and newspapers, and guided readings for League members; d) literacy schools and courses, schools for political

literacy, etc.

### **The Defense of the Soviet Republic**

1. The Komsomol most actively participates in the struggle of the workers' and peasants' Red Army at the republic's fronts, sending from among its members volunteers, political workers, Red nurses, etc.

2. Considering the preparation of the commanders' corps to be one of the most important tasks before the Soviet Republic, the Komsomol recruits for Red Commanders' courses, carrying out its work in the same courses through its own cells.

3. In every way the Komsomol helps to strengthen the rear, helping the Soviet government carry out mobilizations [and] fight desertions, by carrying out educational work among rear detachments, in infirmaries and companies, by participating in the promotion of "weeks for the front," etc.

4. The Komsomol accepts as one of its tasks the energetic elucidation of the idea behind the construction and struggle of the Red Army to young workers and peasants in the RSFSR.

### **The Economic Front and Socialist Construction**

1. The Komsomol actively participates in the struggle of the entire working class at the labor front for a socialist economy (apportioning League resources to its shock work in transportation, fuel, food, and so forth, by carrying out propaganda among the masses about upgrading labor and tasks of economic construction).

2. The Komsomol prepares leaders in the numerous areas of socialist life and economy from among young workers and peasants by means of their practical participation in diverse areas of Soviet construction, especially in those that directly affect youth (such as the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, apprenticeship in organs of production, and in Soviet institutions).

3. The Komsomol trains its members, teaching them the collective labor of Communist society, fights desertion in the general labor conscription (fights absenteeism, [promotes] competition among members over selfless work through reports, labor trials, labor holidays, etc.), organizes mass Saturdays, etc.

4. In the countryside the Komsomol is one of the champions of the development of socialist agriculture, facilitating the highest

flowering of the agricultural economy. The Komsomol participates in the organization of model communal establishments (plots, orchards, experimental fields, foddergrass cultivation, etc.), draws city youth into assisting village workers (agricultural detachments, repair teams, weeks of help to the families of Red Army soldiers, etc.).

5. The Komsomol participates in the organization of agricultural services for the countryside, drawing its members into assisting in diverse types of activities (for example, the building of bathhouses, huts, carts, drying out marshes, ravines, cleaning roads, helping poor peasants).

### **Socialist Education**

1. The proletarian revolution is destroying the bourgeois system of education, conceived for bourgeois youth as middle and high schools, and [which left] laborers [only] crumbs of knowledge in the lower schools. The socialist unified school, which promotes close links between education and socially productive labor and prepares the multifaceted development of the members of Communist society, is replacing the bourgeois school. The country's economic impoverishment, the need for a transition to the highest technical level of production, and the urgent need of socialist society for countless organizers in all areas of life compel the Soviet republic to pay special attention to the technical and professional education and to the preparation of youth for organized social activity. The Komsomol takes an active part in the work of preparing young workers in the area of social organization, industry, and agriculture.

2. The Komsomol cooperates in the establishment of a unified system of Socialist education for youth, tying teaching in the schools for young workers with productive labor in industry and in large-scale agricultural production. This consists of imparting an educational and preparatory character to the work done by youth, by a comprehensive teaching of production at the time of work, by having the students make sense of their work experiences, in the cognition of professional and technical sciences, and from them, the general sciences.

3. The Komsomol considers its work in the construction of the Socialist education of young workers as one of its most urgent tasks. Participating in the work of the leading establishments, the Komsomol draws laboring youth into school, influencing the students through its school cells, striving for the highest development of the students' scientific thinking, promoting discipline, and participating



in the school's self-government.

4. Considering its primary task to be the socialist education of young workers, the Komsomol facilitates the reorganization of the secondary schools with the thought of bringing it closer to the schools for young workers and carrying out political work in them.

### **Labor Protection and the Improvement of Youth's Life and Living Conditions**

1. The Komsomol aims at the full realization of the norms on labor protection (the four-hour day for fourteen to sixteen year olds, the six-hour day for sixteen to eighteen year olds, the removal of all minors under fourteen from unhealthy jobs and night work in industry as well as in government, social work [and] in labor conscriptions), which will create the conditions for the Socialist education of youth and the preservation of the work force for the country's economy.

2. The Komsomol's work aimed at healthier working conditions and lifestyle for youth teaches its members collaboration in the resolution of the questions of their common life, without which Communist society cannot be built.

3. The Komsomol draws young workers and peasants into the improvement of their living conditions: a) for healthier living quarters for young workers through the establishment of a broad network of communal houses for youth, which will replace the family's education with a comradely Communist community; b) through the services of Soviet (state) medicine for youth's needs in the areas of public health through participation in the sanitary improvement of locales, in the fight against disease (participation in nursing homes for the fight against tuberculosis, sanitariums, and colonies), in sanitation training in controlling the correct application of medical help to youth in the city and village; c) by improving nutrition and the provision of essentials through their participation in the organization of and control over dining rooms for children.

4. While striving to return those youths engaged in the black market, crime, and prostitution to productive labor, striving for the creation of healthy working conditions, the distribution of diverse provisions to non-Party youth, the Komsomol conducts propaganda on behalf of the proletarian work ethic among the masses of young workers and peasants.

5. The Komsomol effects its activities for the improvement of

the life and labor of youth through the organs of the industrial trade unions, the institutions of the People's Commissars (of Labor, Social Welfare, Public Health, Food Supplies, etc.) through its participation in the Institute for Labor Inspection (assistants to the Labor Inspectors), and creates a powerful organ of supervision for the protection of working adolescents.

### **The Militia Army and Physical Development**

The Komsomol is the proletarian government's fulcrum in the construction of the militia army through its pre-enlistment preparation, as the Party is for the creation of the Red Army. Its work in this area consists of: a) cooperating with the organs of general military education by unifying everything related to physical development in one branch of the proletarian state; b) in the creation of a Communist reserve for the Red Army made up of pre-enlistment age youth through the organization of League cells, grounds, sports clubs, not only serving as a model for the improvement of health, physical strength, and endurance, but also as the center of political influence and Communist re-education of all youths; c) by recruiting for the Red Commanders' courses for the territorial regiments and sports instructors for pre-enlistment training; d) by guaranteeing political workers for pre-enlistment training (making up the cadre of political guides, political commissars, etc.); e) by conducting widespread propaganda among the masses of young workers, and especially, peasants as to the tasks of the militia army, physical development, and pre-enlistment education and the decisive struggle against deserters from general military training and from the physical education of youth; f) by drawing in all League members (including girls) into obligatory pre-enlistment training; g) by cooperating by all means with the organs of general military training and the system of pre-enlistment training.

### **Charter of the Russian Communist Youth League**

#### **League Members**

1. A member of the Russian Communist Youth League is any person between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three who accepts

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the League's charter and program, who participates actively in one of the organizations, and who obeys all the resolutions of the League organs and pays membership dues.

*Note:* League members who have reached twenty-three years of age may remain in the organization as a passive member (with a consultative vote), but if a passive member is elected to one of the governing organs, then that person shall receive a full vote.

2. Young workers and peasants will be accepted by the League without any kind of recommendation. All other youths will be accepted upon the recommendation of two members of the Communist Party or the Komsomol, who have been in those organizations for at least three months.

3. Those members re-entering the League will be confirmed by a general meeting.

4. Expulsion from the League may result from misdemeanors and breaches of League discipline and for disobedience of the decisions of governing organs.

*Note:* League members who fail to pay dues in the course of three months without a valid reason will be automatically expelled from the League.

5. Expulsion is carried out through the general meeting and the decision may be appealed before a higher organ.

6. The uezd committee will inform the guberniia committee of expulsions in time and [such expulsions] will be aired in the press.

## Organizational Structure

7. The Komsomol is structured on the basis of democratic centralism along territorial lines; a leading organization serving a given district is considered higher than those serving any part of that same district.

8. The highest governing organ of each organization is the general meeting or conference, which elects a committee, which serves as its executive organ and guides all work in the interim between said meetings.

9. For special forms of League work in individual regions corresponding organs are appointed. The departments are subordinate to the committees and act as their auxiliary organs, carrying out their resolutions and decisions, and do not have their own apparatus.

10. The structure of the Komsomol is as follows: within the territory of the RSFSR: the All-Russian Congress and the Central

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Committee; in the territories of the autonomous republics, members of the RSFSR: conferences, central committees working under regional law in their relations to the Central Committees and subordinate to it in all respects; in territories and regions: territorial, and regional bureaus (or, by decision of the Central Committee, territorial and regional committees); in uезdy: uезд conferences and committees; in enterprises, villages, and establishments; general cell meetings and cell bureau or secretary.

*Note:* In those uезdy where a few rural districts have Party groups, it is possible to form similar League zone groups.

### Cells

11. The basic League organization is the cell. Cells are organized in all factories, villages, establishments, and schools where there are at least three members. Cells must be confirmed by local committees.

12. The cells are the organs that link the League with the masses. Through the cells the League's decisions and slogans are put into practice, [and by] drawing new members into the League, they exert Communist influence on the entire mass. The cells provide an example of discipline and high productivity for all other youths.

13. The factory cell carries out economic and legal work among young workers in a given enterprise; it carries out the local committee's tasks in this area, conducts investigation, supervises the correct enforcement of labor protection, [and] facilitates the improvement in the lifestyle of young workers.

14. The cells carry out political education through regular talks, lectures, [and] readings among League members. The cells carry out agitation, propagating Communist ideals among all youth. The cell participates in all possible political campaigns promoted by the League and other organizations, draws its members into the League's club work, etc.

15. At least once a week a general meeting of cell members shall be called. The general meeting discusses questions related to the cell's life, as well as those put forth by the local committee and the League as a whole, [and] elects a cell bureau (consisting of at least three persons). Reports of League members about their work inside and outside the League are heard at the meetings.

*Note:* Where there are fewer than ten members, only a secretary will be elected.



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16. The cell's bureau carries out current work, follows the enactments of higher organs, fulfills the tasks of the local committees, accepts members with the confirmation of general meetings of the local organization, collects membership dues, etc.

17. The cell's bureau presents a weekly account of its work to the local organization's committee.

### The Local Organization

18. All League cells located within the territory of a rural district, a district town, or a district within a major city, constitute a local organization of the League (rural, urban, or district).

### The General Meeting

19. At least twice a month a general meeting is called by the local organization. A general meeting is considered valid with the attendance of half the total number of members; a second general meeting is considered valid irrespective of the number attending it.

*Note:* In rural districts, where there is no possibility for calling general meetings, rural district delegates' meetings are called, and these have all the rights of a general meeting.

20. The general meeting discusses questions of a local character as well as those presented by higher governing organs and those general questions of current life and Soviet construction; it elects committees, hears and confirms its accounts, work plans, and commissions, elects a revision commission, confirms and excludes members, [and] elects delegates at the conference.

### The Local Organization's Committee

21. League members are elected to the committee at the general meeting for a period of no more than three months. [The committee] constitutes the executive organ of the general meeting, guiding the organization's work in the interim between meetings.

22. The committee guides all of the organization's work, puts into practice the resolutions of the higher League organs [taken] at general meetings [and] keeps an exact registration of League members. Twice a month the committee renders a report on its work to the uezd and guberniia committees.

23. Special commissions are created by the committee to do

practical work in specific areas; these work in accordance to the instructions of the League's higher governing organs. The commission's chairman is appointed by the committee and is personally accountable for the commission's work.

### **The Delegates' Meeting**

24. In order to establish more ties between the committee and the masses of young workers and to constantly integrate them into the League's active work, delegates' meetings of factory cells will meet at least twice per month.

25. Delegates' meetings of factory cells hear reports from the committee, the commissions, and the cells, outline work plans, guide the cells' work, discuss the general meeting's agenda, and, if the committee differs with the decisions of the delegates' meeting, said differences are resolved in a general meeting of the organization.

### **The Revision Commission**

26. The revision commission is elected at a general meeting with a composition of three members who revise the committee's administrative and economic affairs.

### **Guberniia and Uezd Organizations**

27. Guberniia conferences are called once every six months; uezd conferences are called once every three months.

*Note:* Extraordinary guberniia conferences may be called upon request of one-third of the uezd committees.

28. Guberniia and uezd conferences hear and confirm the reports from the committees and revision commissions, discuss the questions concerning the movement, elect committees and revision commissions.

29. Uezd conferences discuss the agenda for guberniia conferences and elect delegates to them. Guberniia conferences prepare the questions to be discussed at the All-Russian Congress and elects delegates.

30. Guberniia committees are elected at guberniia conferences, uezd committees at uezd [conferences], and constitute governing organs in the period between congresses.

31. Guberniia committees have the responsibility to guide and

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instruct uezd committees and local organizations, to put into practice the decisions of the All-Russian Congress and the Central Committee, to publish a guberniia organ, and to represent the League in general guberniia organizations and establishments.

32. Uezd committees have the responsibility to establish and confirm new organizations, to instruct and inform the existing ones, to guide their work, [and] to represent [the League] at uezd organizations and establishments.

33. Guberniia and uezd committees appoint a bureau of three to five persons to guide their daily work.

34. Guberniia and uezd committees create corresponding departments to put into practice the various questions in specific areas. The basic departments within guberniia committees are: political education, economic-legal, [and] military-sports.

35. The working apparatus for the guberniia and uezd committee is the secretariat. The secretariat carries out all instructional and organizational work, effects ties among the organizations, distributes workers and instructors, keeps track of them, keeps accounts of all League work and statistics, and constitutes a link among the committees departments.

36. Every two months guberniia committees call guberniia gatherings of representatives from uezd committees in order to strengthen the ties among the local organizations and to discuss issues and work plans jointly.

37. Guberniia and uezd committees make their activities known in the press, uezd conferences, and general meetings, and also render monthly reports to uezd and local organizations.

38. Guberniia committees send monthly reports of their work and summaries of their guberniias to the Central Committee. Uezd committees send the same twice a month both to the guberniia committee and to the Central Committee.

## Regional Organs

39. In the outlying territories and regions there are territorial and regional bureaus of the Central Committee and, upon the decision of the Central Committee, oblast' committees elected at oblast' conferences.

Both have the responsibility to guide directly the League's work at the oblast' level and to establish ties between the guberniia committees and the RKSM's Central Committee.

## **The All-Russian Congress**

40. The RKSM's highest governing organ is the All-Russian Congress called by the Central Committee at least once per year.

*Note:* Extraordinary congresses may be called upon the request of one-third of the guberniia committees.

41. The All-Russian Congress hears and confirms the reports from the Central Committee and the revision commission, confirms the League's program and charter, lays down the movement's general line, [and] elects the Central Committee and the revision commission.

## **The Central Committee**

42. The Komsomol's highest governing organ during the period between congresses is the Central Committee.

43. The Central Committee guides all of the League's work, represents the League in general state institutions and organizations, and publishes the League's central organ.

44. The Central Committee prepares for the All-Russian Congress, defines the norms of representation, and lays down the congress's agenda.

45. At least once every two months a plenary meeting of the Central Committee is held.

46. In order to establish ties with the local [organizations] and to discuss current issues, the Central Committee calls an All-Russian conference with League representatives from the guberniia committees at least once every four months.

47. Once per month the Central Committee sends a report of its activities to guberniia committees and publishes them in the press.

## **Relations between the Komsomol, Soviet, and Party Organizations**

48. Komsomol organizations (local, uezd, guberniia, and central committees) establish reciprocal representation with the corresponding organizations of the RCP (b).

49. In order to establish contact and to participate in their work, the Komsomol sends its representatives to the departments of



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labor, education, and others.

50. The League's representatives with the Party and Soviet establishments constantly render accounts of their work to those organizations that have sent them.

### Finances

51. Financial means derive from membership dues, assignments, subsidies, and other revenues.

52. Membership dues are mandatory and are set at 1/2 percent of monthly wages.

*Note:* In cases where the set dues are an impossibility, the uezd committee presents them upon confirmation of the guberniia committee.

53. All local organizations are obliged to send 10 percent of all revenues, with the exception of subsidies, to the Central Committee. They will follow the following order: local organizations send 30 percent of their revenues to the uezd committee; the uezd committee keeps 10 percent for itself, and sends the rest to the guberniia committee; the guberniia committee keeps half of all revenues for itself and sends the other half to the Central Committee.

## Notes

1. Trud i svet's charter and manifesto reprinted in P. F. Kudelli, ed., *Leninskoe pokolenie* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1926) 63-64.
2. Authors listed as I. Skorinko and V. Alekseev. Reprinted in *Na puti k komsomolu*, ed. Grigorii Driazgov (Leningrad: Priboi, 1924), 97-98.
3. Program and charter of the SSRM adopted at the First All-City Conference, 18-28 August 1917. Reprinted in P. F. Kudelli, ed., *Leninskoe pokolenie*, 66-69.
4. Komsomol Program and Charter adopted at the First National Congress in 1918 and published in *Protokoly I s'ezda RKSM*, ed. O. Ryvkin (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934), 97-100.
5. The third program and charter of the Communist Youth League were published in Istmol TsK RLKSM, *Tretii vserossiiskii s'ezd RKSM (2-10 oktiabriia 1920 goda): stenograficheskii otchet*, (Moscow-Leningrad, 1926), 306-321.



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*Iunyi proletarii*, organ, Komsomol Petrograd Committee.

*Izvestiia TsK RKSM*, organ, Komsomol Central Committee.

*Komsomol'skaia letopis'*, Komsomol Central Committee.

*Krasnaia gazeta*.

*Listok iunogo proletarii*, organ, Petrograd Committee, SSRM, 1918.

*Molodaia gvardiia*, Komsomol Central Committee.

*Novaia zhizn'*, Petrograd, 1917-1918.

*Petrogradskaia pravda*, Petrograd, (abbrev. PP).

*Pozyvnye istorii*, Komsomol Central Committee.

*Pravda*.

*Rabochii i soldat*, Petrograd, 1917.

*Smena*, organ, Petrograd Province Komsomol.

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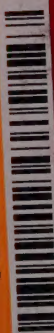


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